

AMALGAMATED CONSUMER INFORMATION: UNDERSTANDING THE
TECHNOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON OLDER ADULT
CONGREGANTS

By

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ABSTRACT

AMALGAMATED CONSUMER INFORMATION: UNDERSTANDING THE TECHNOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON OLDER ADULT CONGREGANTS

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This project addresses the technological challenges many older adult congregants face with learning basic computer skills. And to shed light on the critical role of older adults in the ministry and how learning essential digital basic skills can enhance their work in the church, personal lives, and communities. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, older adult basic computer skill programs were scarce. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the sad truth and this dire need within our congregations and the community.

When I initially expressed my interest in advocating the importance of an older adult technology ministry, the responses I received were "how cute" or "that's nice." On January 30, 2022, I was invited to another Baptist Church to preach during its Missionary Sunday Service. The senior Pastor began reading my bio as part of my introduction. When he read the portion of my bio where I wrote, *"I am an advocate for empowering older adults using new-age technology basics to enhance ministry."* The Pastor then turned to me and said, *"Amen, Amen, COVID made us do that!"*

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. exemplified the value in older adult congregants. As a minister at Union Baptist Church of Stamford, CT, and an advocate for older adults for over twenty-five years, this project will seek to empower the disparage, the forgotten, and capable older adult Christians with essential digital skills needed for ministry and much more.

I want to dedicate this project in loving memory of my mother, Josephine Thomas, my brother, Orrin Jenkins, and my sister Marice Best. Also, my grandmother, Ollie Mae Hendrix, and my uncle Carl Hendrix, all of whom did not have the opportunity to see me reach this far in pursuit of higher education.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS: A NEW ERA

Our church slogan is "The Church Where the Spirit of God Reigns." This slogan encompasses our stories, values, characteristics, and commitments that make up our founders' collective identity. It began in the year 1888, twenty-three years after the close of the Civil War, which marked a significant period in the lives of African American citizens in Stamford, Connecticut.¹ The year became momentous as we are reminded today when we walk through the church doors, there lies the artifacts depicting our humble beginnings.

In 1888 a small group of approximately twenty-five individuals who were former slaves and the descendants of former slaves decided to organize the Union Baptist Mission. Union was born out of the souls of good Christians who felt that they could no longer accept the segregated practices of the Stamford Baptist Church where they had formerly been allowed to worship. On June 29, 1899, the Mission was officially named the Union Baptist Church (UBC), and a new church was built on the corner of Adams Avenue and Vista Street.²

In 1888 these African Americans relocated from southern states to settle in Stamford to make a new life with their families in Connecticut. The new church on

¹ Margaret J. Smith, "Church History," <https://ubcstamford.org/church-history/> (accessed October 23, 2020).

² Ibid.

Adams Avenue continued to thrive. In January 1923, a new era began as the site on Adams Avenue, and Vista Street across the street from the original wooden frame church was purchased (the lot on which the former church now stands).

With the completion of the new stone church, the congregation regularly used the old wooden frame building for social and community affairs and numerous events. It was indeed the sign of a new era.³

Some of the tension experienced with church members led to splits over the church's 133 years plus span. As a result, other local churches that came out of Union Baptist Church were born and relocated. Some members formed a local Haitian church in Stamford, Connecticut, included in the separation. Our traditions remained, and some practiced today. While other traditions are now on hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

TRADITIONS: A CELEBRATORY MOMENT

Adhering to our articles of faith is part of our tradition. The New Hampshire Confession is our declaration of faith and practices consistent with all Baptist Churches' views in the New Hampshire State Convention in 1833. It began with 16 Articles of Faith and with 20 Articles of Faith in 1882. The articles are also consistent with the views of Baptist Churches in Connecticut. Our Baptist traditions belong to the Protestant denomination. We are part of the Connecticut State Missionary Baptist Convention, founded in 1904.⁴

³ Smith, "Church History."

⁴ Lindsey Curtis, "Connecticut State Missionary Baptist Convention," <https://www.ctbaptist.org/index.php/about-us/what-we-believe> (accessed June 25, 2020).

Our tradition comprises over 133 years of existence: preparations for communion services by our Deaconess and our Deacons' interactions following rituals and traditions still practiced today. One of the longest traditions to which our congregation belongs is the installation of deacons. Deacons are members of the church body. Our deacon ministry oversees most of the programs, the church's work internally and externally, and community outreach initiatives.

Another part of Union Baptist Church tradition is our involvement in local community leadership responsibilities, including education, medicine, politics, and government. Our relationships consist of a long history of community engagement. Other traditions have changed over the years. One of which includes embracing women as clergy. One of UBC's accomplishments included in February 1981, the Union family licensed its first woman preacher.⁵ Today, UBC has on record twelve women that served on our ministerial staff. Thanks to our Senior Pastor, Reverend Dr. Robert W. Perry, a leader with vision.

WOMEN CLERGY: FROM RESIST TO EMBRACE

Union Baptist Church embraces women in ministry. As previously mentioned, there have been 12 women as clergy members at Union Baptist Church of Stamford. I believe there is more to join the ministerial staff in the foreseeable future. This unprecedented female clergy growth is excellent; unfortunately, there are still churches without women in ministry. I am often reminded of the resistance one of the clergy's women endured when joining UBC's clergy staff when women in the clergy were not embraced or allowed at UBC.

⁵ Smith, "Church History."

UBC: RITUALS AND ORDINANCES

We are a part of the Connecticut State Missionary Baptist Convention. In 1904 the convention was organized at the Messiah Baptist Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Our organization has grown from eleven church memberships to eighty church memberships. The cross is our symbol, Holy Communion and Baptisms are our rituals. The two things that distinguish the Baptist Church from other Christian Churches are that we are autonomous, having the right or power to self-government. Also, we dedicate babies rather than baptize them. We believe there are two great ordinances of the church – Baptism and Holy Communion.

We find that the ordinance of baptism by immersion in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe in Christ as Savior and Lord are baptized as they are physically able. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 8:26-38). Baptism is an outward sign of an inward spiritual renewal and rebirth.⁶ The other of the two great ordinances is Holy Communion.

The ordinance of Holy Communion, also known as the Lord's Supper, consists of the broken bread, the body of Jesus Christ, and the fruit of the vine-the shed blood of our Lord and Savior. It is a memorial of His suffering and death (I Corinthians 11:26); our fellowship and communion with all believers (Ephesians 4:4-6); and our prophetic expectation of His second coming (I Corinthians 11:26.)⁷ Both of which summarizes our two significant sacraments.

The proclamation of the Word of God is an essential part of worship. An empty Holy Cross is the symbol used that is consistent with our rituals as it represents Christ's

⁶ Union Baptist Church of Stamford, 2019 *Celebrating 131 Years of The Union Baptist Church: Harvest - Sowing Healthy Seeds for Mind Body and Soul* (Union Baptist Church of Stamford, 2019).

⁷Ibid.

crucifixion and resurrection. We believe that religious liberty is a gift from God. We also believe that Holy men, inspired by God, wrote the bible. It is our doctrine that in Holy Communion, the whole substances of the bread and wine are not changed into the blood and body of Christ; it represents the blood and the body of Christ. Furthermore, our 14th, "Article of Faith," best describes our worldview beliefs and values: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer. Believers are Baptized, in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It is our proclamation to our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. It is a prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the church members, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; always preceded by solemn self-examination.⁸ As a whole, we honor our biblical truth without negotiation or compromise.

NEW LOCATION: A NEW WAY TO FELLOWSHIP

As membership steadily grew, leadership knew the original church building soon could not accommodate all its members.

UBC purchased the 805 Newfield Avenue facility with the understanding that the acreage which was acquired would allow for the development of a larger building when appropriate. The year 1991 was identified as one of the most challenging years in the history of Union Baptist Church. The vision for the edifice was created...the proposed new building would seat 1,100 persons. This included a fellowship hall that would accommodate 400 persons in a banquet style motif and a sanctuary that would provide seating for 850 persons.⁹

⁸ Curtis, "Connecticut State."

⁹ Smith, "Church History."

Today, the congregation at Union Baptist Church of Stamford (UBC) comprises approximately 1,500 registered members, of which about 200 members attended church weekly. The 200 or more members regularly attended church before March 15, 2020, when the U.S. states began to shut down to prevent the spread of COVID-19.¹⁰ At UBC, we continue to glorify God by creating a loving and welcoming spiritual environment where the Spirit of God reigns.

The goal of this Older Adult Information Technology Ministry is to foster this same concept of glorifying God in everything we do. Several of UBC's ministry's range from Children's Choir, Children's Church, other Choirs, Deacon & Deaconess, Greeters, Helping Hand, Men's, Missionary, Nurses, Praise Dance, Progress, Sound, Trustee, Ushers, Women's to Autumn Gold (our older adults) ministries. Other ministries include specific community outreach programs such as Oktoberfest (which continues to grow yearly and is one of our most prominent community outreach ministries pre-COVID-19) and Angel Tree, both of which are a part of our Prison Ministry.

Prior to the pandemic, the most recent ministries are our Strategic Planning and Christian Meditation ministries. All of which allows the church to demonstrate the love of God in our lives and to the world.

PLAN FOR RETIREMENT: AN UNEXPECTED CHANGES

One of the things that changed in our congregation that has taken place over the years was when a former Assistant Pastor, Reverend Leroy Parker, resigned from his post after approximately six years of servitude. Reverend Parker's departure significantly

¹⁰ David J. Spencer, "CDC Museum COVID-19 Timeline" *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, entry posted August 4, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/museum/timeline/covid19.html#:~:text=January%2020%2C%202020%20CDC,18%20in%20Washington%20state>. (accessed November 16, 2021).

altered the service environment's dynamics in terms of a melancholy feel that penetrated the atmosphere. Reverend Parker's resignation affected the youth ministry most. We continued to praise God. We continued to glorify God. More specifically, we became concerned about the inability of our Pastor to retire. Reverend Parker's church's departure accounted for a transition that impacted the church's growth for a few years. Each ministry was affected to some degree. Again, this change mainly affected the youth ministry. The unexpected resignation of Reverend Parker placed a halt on Pastor Perry's retirement plans.

After the Assistant Pastor, Reverend Parker, left the church, the newly assigned Assistant to Pastor, Dr. Michael G. Christie, was instrumental in keeping the church afloat, ministries engaged, and fostering yet another transition UBC would later face. Unfortunately, our prominent church leader, Deacon William Callion, Jr., former city Public Safety Director, chairman of the *Stamford* Police Foundation, and mayoral candidate, passed away. Deacon Callion Jr.'s passing `It was a surprise and significant blow to the UBC family. Deacon Callion was instrumental in both shaping and assisting with sustaining the church for approximately 33 years. Today, our most considerable representation has been the Assistant to the Pastor, Dr. Michael G. Christie, and our new leadership team.

Over the years, the church's existence has a conglomerate of pastoral leaders, laypeople, and other members like our beloved head, Deacon William Callion. Today, our new leadership team is working diligently to stay abreast of technological advances to remain relevant, current, and capable, especially during the present calamities we face today and amidst future unforeseeable circumstances due to COVID-19. All this

profoundly impacts our church and this new leadership team and the Assistant to Pastor, Reverend Dr. Michael G. Christie, is essential, viable, and open to change in this tech-savvy world.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS: COMMITMENT

Before COVID-19, UBC's ministries included several recently implemented social engagement programs. These programs addressed the need for more interaction amongst members, such as Singles Ministry, Progressive Ministry (for 18-35+ members), and the Men's Locker Room ministry as examples. During this time, the church began to appear unperturbed on both the idea and scarcely placed importance on social interaction ministries for adults within the church. Social interaction became a theme, and shortly afterward, a former member decided to have her wedding reception at the church in our Fellowship Hall. The rumor was they would have alcohol served. However, what appeared to be a tolerant, more laidback church environment created an opportunity for some to assume that our Senior Pastor, Reverend Dr. Robert W. Perry, would agree to allow alcoholic beverages in the church wedding reception. This idea created an uproar leaving the Pastor deciding to address the circulating rumor. There were no significant resources affected by this rumor. However, Pastor Perry felt obligated to make a public announcement denouncing the gossip. This effect led to halting the social programs, and there were limited to no other social programs executed at the church since then.

The mindset of many changed dramatically because of this worldwide pandemic. Initially, there was resistance to streaming services before the COVID-19 epidemic. The COVID-19 crises now represent an opportunity to regroup, refocus, and revise to incorporate technological advances designed to sustain the church during other unforeseeable circumstances. Today, the astronomical cost may derail the opportunity to

implement this technology and strategic communications program. As a result, a more economical and informational component to an older adult technology ministry is best needed.

Our church covenant reflects our ministry, mission, and spirituality as a body of Christ. We are a congregation of baptized believers associated by the covenant in the Gospel's faith and fellowship. One of our commitments is to serve our racial/ethnic churches. Our interfaith relationships continue to grow, and our responsibilities to represent God in the world, acknowledging in fellowship that we serve the same one and only true living God.

Many other ministries best represent our congregations' commitments to cultural and social obligations: Black History Month, Octoberfest (in place of Halloween), Angel Tree (Prison Ministry program for children of incarcerated parents), the Helping Hand Ministry, which covers the history of Union Baptist Church of Stamford has been a journey starting with its founders.

Recently, our Senior Pastor, Reverend Dr. Robert W. Perry, officially announced that he was planning to retire in May 2020 before COVID-19. Our church had begun conducting a self-study as the body of Christ, starting with our congregants and leadership team. This course of action prompted us to create a congregational questionnaire as part of our search for a new senior pastor.

Pastor Perry is recognized as the "Godfather" of preachers, and he is irreplaceable to many. Nonetheless, the process of searching for a new senior pastor was underway. We mailed out questionnaires with the hopes of compiling the information needed to assist in this selection process. Pastor Perry is a model senior pastor.

Our model of fellowship comprises of beliefs and values. For example, we believe that women should not wear pants or trousers in the pulpit. I believe that it is acceptable for women to wear pants in the pulpit. In my opinion, it is not a sign of disrespect or of dishonoring God. That is my only view in terms of rituals and the pulpit.

Our church services pre-COVID-19 comprised of a congregation of 95% African American or of African descent. The cross's symbol is the only symbol we display representing who we are as Christ's body. During the prelude to one of our Sunday Services streamed on May 31, 2020, our senior Pastor, Dr. Perry, gave a descriptive summary streamed online instead of views from the actual pulpit - of who we are as a church. He stated, "The kingdom of God is made up of God's people, which we call the church. The church is not a building; it is not brick and mortar. We are the people of God, wedded by the blood of Jesus Christ, bound as one; we are the church."¹¹

RELENTLESS MISSION: A LEADER'S ATTRIBUTES

Yes, we are the church. Our missionary and deacon ministries are the two most important ministries that demonstrate decades of the most laborious groups' ongoing mission:

To marshal all the available resources and technologies to make known the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This good news we proclaim must be authentic and a living witness in the lives of those who proclaim, praise, and practice it. Our mission must ensure that we are in partnership with God and deliverance from the bondage of economic oppression, racial bigotry, and social-political injustice with God's rule in our hearts. As a church, we foster and promote praise to our God, who gave us Jesus, who has set us free and made us whole.¹²

¹¹ Union Baptist Church of Stamford, "Pentecost & Missionary Sunday/By Any Means Necessary," Union Baptist Church Stamford, CT, May 31, 2020, YouTube video, 27:17, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrUfUaYNePA>.

¹² Union, "Pentecost."

I believe that, like with the early church in biblical times, church congregations and Christian fellowship did not transpire without encountering power struggles, disagreements, vain aspirations, and pseudo-transformational leadership characteristics. Paul notes much of these behaviors in many of the epistles from Pauline's letters. Union Baptist Church of Stamford has its bout with tensions and conflicts amongst members.

From my observations, most of this stems from successful church members who pay tithes regularly or go over and beyond tithe giving. These behaviors appear to have believed "Rites-of-Passage" undertones from these members. Moreover, their exclusivity behaviors aided in un-Christian-like behaviors. Of course, this is one example of power struggles from the pews, at least.

A transformative leader's attributes lead to transforming others and is open to self-transformation along with those they instruct. Pastor Perry is the best representation of the appropriate usage of spiritual gifts' diversity. Jesus Christ led the way for us. Pastor demonstrates as humanly possible how we can strive to hone our spiritual gifts and the appropriate way to remain humble, always seeking to glorify God from whom the spiritual gifts are given and not of our works.

Pastor Perry's opinion always seems to gain the most significant measure of responsibility in the church. We believe in one God. We believe in Jesus, His only begotten Son. We believe in the death and the resurrection of Jesus, and we believe in eternal life.¹³ The spiritual pillars of our congregation are the Pastor, Deacons, and the

¹³ Jorge Pezo-Candelario, "Union Baptist Church of Stamford," <https://ubcstamford.org/> (accessed June 26, 2020).

Missionary Ministry. Our tithes and offerings' primary source of financial support offers the decision-making obtained from our leadership team.

Today, this team comprises our Pastor, Reverend Dr. Robert W. Perry, our Assistant to Pastor, Reverend Dr. Michael G. Christie, our Trustee Chair, Wanda Hill, and other leadership team members. The informal channels are the office workers, primarily our office manager and ministry leaders.

CHURCH RESPONSIBILITY: STAYING CONNECTED

A global coronavirus epidemic produced the type of pandemic that birthed a new paradigm shift. How we live, how we interact with each other, how we now perceive our future goals, how we exercise our belief systems globally, and how church leaders are forced to re-imagine the possibilities and responsibilities of keeping the church afloat. Nonetheless, each church's responsibility is to reinvent multiple communication channels, primarily through digital means today. Many churches are incapable or unable to offer streaming services or other technological outlets for delivering content. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the communication channels utilized today and now work in our congregation's life are Zoom Meeting; Zoom is a software-based conference room used as an alternative solution to social distancing guidelines set by the state. We utilize Zoom for safety measures and to minimize and stop the spread of COVID-19. However, this interaction is excellent with some older adults; it is minuscule to an older adult with only a landline communication mode.

Today, the new setting in the life of Union Baptist Church is part of a global phenomenon. Pre-social distancing, I can be counted on to know what is going on in the life of Union Baptist Church of Stamford. The consensus is that we must work together as a team to continue the church's work. Also, I am willing to discuss what is going on in

the life of our church. Besides, it is a blessing to know that I can count on our deacons to understand what is going on in the church's life. These deacons are well trained, and they take their roles seriously. The world's state hangs on the limbs of uncertainty, or life appears to be hanging in the balance, and its unanswered questions are a globally shared concern. The religious/spiritual and non-secular communities are part of this new set of "The Unknown."

Pre-COVID-19, Union Baptist Church was an inclusive church in many aspects; however, our cliques are no different from most organizations to various degrees. The most significant tensions and conflicts stem from members expecting leadership roles to carry out by popularity. When this is not the case, friction happens, and cliques create divided walls that Jesus broke down. "For He is our peace; in His flesh, He has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us." (Eph. 2:14 NRSV).¹⁴

For several years, we have incorporated administering questionnaires to church congregants and program participants. It has been one of the practices to observe our ministries and programs' effectiveness, both in the church and our local community. Some questionnaires are provided online, and the majority have given in-person. One of our fundamental practices is to divulge the results of these evaluations to the rest of the congregation. Assessments will be constructive methods used regularly. Our commitment to hearing directly from our members continues as we look for ways to worship together in a new environment, changing frequently and for safety reasons.

¹⁴ New Revised Standard Version is used for this project.

FACING TECHNOLOGICAL FEARS: THE INITIAL CONVERSATION

Although Union Baptist Church is an inclusive organization, we take pride in educating congregants and implementing strategies designed for spiritual growth individually and collectively. We had an older adult ministry that was thriving pre-COVID-19 because of its revitalized outreach ministry. The church no longer included a program designed to teach older adults basic computer skills. However, this more senior adult ministry would be instrumental in facilitating a new-age Older Adult Technology Ministry.

The face-to-face collaborations are contingent on the support from our leaders, deacons, and other congregants that are willing to partake in this initiative. Due to social distancing standards, today's setting forces one-on-one aspects of an Older Adult Technology Ministry contingent upon practicing safe guidelines, documentation, and researching best practices and resources available for Adults who are both technologically illiterate.

Our direct interactions with an Older Adult Information Technology program must begin with the uncomfortable facts. What is mindboggling is older adults are already fearful of the internet. Yet, this program must be diligent about teaching seniors the importance of facing their fears with technology. Although it may be sometime before there would be a complete in-person program, fieldwork has become and may remain for some time the primary interaction with program participants; these encounters are the new initial setting for most program participants.

An Older Adult Information Technology ministry will support UBC's content-related features and services, streaming services, and the UBC website. There is an unexpected, unimagined, and unpredictable new setting in-person and virtually.

A NECESSARY MINISTRY: FROM CUTE TO MANDATORY

Before COVID-19, the idea of conducting a technology program designed for older adults was a "cute" idea. There is nothing "cute" about preparing each member, every able body for ministry on any level. As a body of Christ, we are associated with the covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel also; our mission is to go into all the world and WIN the lost to Christ.

All communication forms of technology available to the public provide another platform for winning the loss to Christ. Today, older adults are alienated more than ever due to COVID-19. Most of the conversations today do not happen without mentioning our older adults and their inability to stay connected because of their limited access to the internet, digital devices, and fear of the internet.

Older adults are targets for scammers due to their little knowledge of operating digital devices, and their fear is substantiated due to their vulnerability. Educating older adults on the topic of internet scammers would be a mandatory part of this ministry. Tech scammers are in hot pursuit of this susceptible group. These scammers know how to exploit that fear to their advantage...Tech support scams stand out for the disproportionate harm they may be causing older adults.¹⁵

Finance and volunteers associated with this ministry will likely change over time. I would probably gain more financial support and willing volunteers, and other resources to assist me with an Older Adult Technology Ministry than ever imagined. Based on UBC's current infrastructure, our technology ministry adequately sufficed. Before the

¹⁵ Emma Fletcher, "Older adults hardest hit by tech support scams" *Federal Trade Commission*, entry posted March 7, 2019, <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/blogs/data-spotlight/2019/03/older-adults-hardest-hit-tech-support-scams> (accessed November 17, 2021).

COVID-19 pandemic, my then Demonstration Project introduced a new and evolving setting that changed again and continues to evolve.

Peer Visits assignment is a designated task as part of this DMIN program.

However, due to safety measures, the Peer Visit necessary to complete this "Congregational Profile" associated with this project had taken the backseat. As the news of additional COVID-19 variants plagues the world and the rise of a third wave immerses, peer visits almost seem irrelevant for now. Do I request the presence of a class colleague to join me as my Peer Visit counterpart, or should I continue to delay the request until this unpredictable impact of COVID-19 entirely unfolds? Social Distancing robs any guests of what was and forces the present normality and leaves room for the imagination of what will be for the Church as a whole.

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH TODAY: OUR NEW NORMAL

From my observation, Church membership declined and has yet to revive or regain the same or higher level of membership participation. And, after the COVID-19 pandemic, and like other churches, attendance appears to be at an all-time low after our churches' reopening. Much of this experience with a decline in church membership has reverberated throughout the church community.

We officially began the search for a new senior pastor. Our Pastoral Search Committee recently recommended their choice, and the final stages of the process have begun. Over the coming weeks, we will soon have a senior pastor. The new pastors' vision for the church may encompass his views for an Older Adult Information Technology Ministry. Nonetheless, this program is designed to flourish no matter who leads, no matter the size, whether it is an in-person or virtual program.

The COVID-19 pandemic taught us just as technology became a vital resource for connecting, and technology will continue to draw us all to its dependency. Therefore, the setting does not minimize the urgency for an Older Adult Information Technology Program in every church, community center, or organization older adults frequent. Instead, a virtual program has become part of the initial planning stages and not a secondary option as initially intended.

CHAPTER 2 ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE

OLDER ADULTS AND TECHNOLOGY: EXPOSED CHALLENGES

This Project was initially entitled "*Using New Age Technology to Empower Older Adults in the Church and the Community.*" It intended to develop an essential program designed to fill the void of minimal or non-existing technology programs within the church and the community. Like any other age group across the globe, culture varies. The diversification of older adults like other diverse groups ranges from culture, race, religion, ages 65+, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, and economic status. And based upon the geographical locations, their challenges are multifaceted. Thus, a technology program within a church or the community will also include many of these diverse variations. Therefore, infrastructure and logistics would play a key role from start to finish. During the infancy stages of my demonstration project, I received numerous pats on my back from ministerial colleagues to fellow seminarians for my "Nice idea."

Silently the response angered me. From my years of experience, I believe the response mirrors the melting pot of the American culture. Some people respect, revere, and idolize older adults, while others see older adults as irrelevant, incompetent, and challenging. The National Center for Biotechnology Information, notes that due to the pandemic, the pre-existing social, political, and economic systems are becoming more vulnerable, which has led to the marginalization of socioeconomically vulnerable

groups.¹⁶ Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. was not only the senior pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church; he also fought for social justice as a community activist. His work in the community included advocating for seniors. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. was not only a politician. He used the church to build community. His contributions are underappreciated and minimally recognized for their impact on the church and community.

This Older Adult Information Technology Program has become my contribution to supporting older adults. There were fewer senior technology programs available to older adults until COVID-19. Now there are many older adult technology programs, yet hands-on resources are not readily available. The goal of this program is to help bridge the gap. Today my dissertation is titled “Amalgamated Consumer Information: Understanding the Technological Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Older Adult Congregants.”

Older adults were significantly impacted by COVID-19. Consumer information is accessible for tech-savvy older adults. Yet, COVID-19 also amplified the exposure of technological resources for the disparaged group amongst older adults, and COVID-19 exposed substantial challenges for this forgotten group. Given the massive role of healthcare infrastructure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it must raise questions regarding how other essential care options are provided and why a proper alternative

¹⁶ Jang Soong-nang and Kim Chang-O, “Care Inequality among Older Adults during the COVID-19 pandemic” *National Center for Biotechnology Information*, entry posted December 28, 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7781961/> (accessed November 14, 2021).

system has not been established. Delayed medical care utilization and the failure of a continuum of care are expected to affect older adults' health status adversely.

Although we had recognized these problems in healthcare delivery systems even before the outbreak, they are more pronounced in the current situation.¹⁷

TRANSPARENCY: A CHALLENGE ON TOP OF A CHALLENGE

My goal is to provide a transparent combined ministry and informational Older Adult Information Technology Program. However, in my attempt to be fine during this process, and admittedly refocusing did not immediately happen amid a global pandemic. As with many others, I was numb for several months. I found myself caught in a moment of motionlessness. In hindsight, the state of immobility did appear to last long, and admittedly, it took a toll on me. The dissertation includes what I have expounded, which reveals my challenge and is provided within this composition in greater detail.

OLDER ADULTS: A REAL-WORLD CHALLENGE

As a senior citizen/older adult advocate for over 25 years and minister of Union Baptist Church in Stamford, Connecticut, I believe we removed older adults from the digital age. Pre-COVID-19 pandemic, statistics show that only nine percent of older adults age 75 or over are comfortable with technology basics primarily due to age-related motor-skill decline. This ministry will create a transformative ministry of straightforward real-world digital methodologies and resources designed for older adults through data analytics and relevant field studies on an entirely different level due to COVID-19.

TECHNOLOGY EMPOWERS MINISTRY: BY WAY OF COVID-19

¹⁷ Jang Soong-nang and Kim Chang-O, "Care Inequality among Older Adults during the COVID-19 pandemic" *National Center for Biotechnology Information*, entry posted December 28, 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7781961/> (accessed November 14, 2021).

In collecting the data and analyzing the culture of older adult congregants during the COVID-19 Pandemic, this report begins as an inward view of an outward cry from older adult congregants for acknowledgment that they too have an essential role in the body of Christ.

Why are families not reaching out and assisting their older adults' members so they can continue to develop their walk with God in this constantly evolving tech-savvy world? Family support for older adults will promote technology basics and foster comfort levels for older adults operating digital devices for personal, community, and ministry uses with or without assistance from family members in some cases.

The ministry is designed to provide an essential Older Adult Information Technology Program within the church and the community. This proves to be imperative, particularly during the calamities we face today with the novel virus COVID-19. In some forms, this program can also represent a Digital Relief initiative for older adults significantly impacted by unforeseeable and unpredictable crises in this rapidly evolving technological society. Older adults of any age, mental and physical limitations are critical when capable of teaching the word of God, led by the Spirit of the living God, fulfilling kingdom-minded responsibilities given to all Christians.

This dissertation is needed to provide churches with technical information suitable, accessible, and comprehensive enough for any older adult regardless of their cognitive or motor-decline challenges. In addition, it is designed to foster supportive ways to address the primary challenge or challenges any size church may encounter when soliciting assistance designing, implementing, or executing an Older Adult Information Technology ministry and program.

Older adults need the necessary skillsets for advancing the Gospel through technological means and for worship. Using simpler digital devices, applications, and methodologies to engage in programs can and is generally a challenge for them.

Currently, the following ways older adults with limited basic technological skills can participate, listen, and connect to streaming services or Zoom teleconferences are as follows:

- Landline
- Cell phone
- Tablets

Yet, all the above pose challenges for some older adults to stream, although connecting may come more manageable for most people. Some older adults encounter complexities deemed simple for others. Many older adults do not have access to WiFi as an alternative, and many only have a landline or cell phone with calling and texting options only.

Besides, this program will provide the type of systematic change needed to cultivate a higher level of independence, especially given what we do not know about COVID-19's disproportionate impact on older adults. Therefore, my fundamental focus is to equip older adults with technological skillsets to improve cognitive and natural progressions associated with aging. I believe this program will strengthen the physical and mental abilities of older adults. Low adaptation to the digital era is a barrier in daily living that reduces the quality of life, independence, and ministry. Most seniors cannot advance the Gospel through technology in today's technologically savvy world. Another aspiration of this dissertation is to incorporate statistical evidence in support of this claim.

In my opinion, this program will address this issue by creating a transformative Senior-Centric Technology Program. Most importantly, to build life-changing opportunities so older adults can exercise independence as much as humanly possible. For all, capable hands-on-deck is needed for building and uplifting the kingdom of God.

THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL, BUT THE LABORERS ARE FEW: OUTSIDE OF THE BOX

Our challenges today pose a completely unexpected different set of concepts. One set of ideologies, methods, and standards will never be the same post-COVID-19. The Spirit of the living God is speaking to us louder than ever before. The "Spirit of God" guides us and shows us that we need to change our mindsets and refocus to see beyond our myopic views. My 2019 Capstone entitled "The Spirit and Technology in the 21st Century: *The Advancement of Missionary Work*" would have been somewhat of a premonition of what we face today because of COVID-19. The advancement of technology expansions missionary work. I BELIEVE the COVID-19 Pandemic, being forced to distance ourselves on the heels of the 2nd millennia, is an uncanny insight for missionary work to be innovative. The challenge of the church is real. The church has to reframe from doing things the old way. Every ministry must think creatively. The church must look outside of the box to see what God is trying to show us¹⁸

TRUE CHARISMA: PAVING THE WAY

We must embrace a global crisis. Our change in the congregation setting and worldview fosters a spiritual revolution as God has shifted the atmosphere. Our new setting is virtual. This project is now centered on the unique setting. How do we provide

¹⁸ Jenice, E. Jeter, "The Spirit and Technology in the 21st Century: The Advancement of Missionary Work" (MA cap., New York Theological Seminary, 2019).

an amalgamated set of standards and resources for all older adult congregants at all levels of abilities?

I believe that God is preparing us for what is to come, according to His will and according to His plan. Jesus the Christ paved the way. Older adults are an example of the Spirit of God rattling the dry bones, for the Spirit of God is ever so prevalent today, leading the way. Villafane states the Spirit's charismatic nature presented another clue to our Christian roadmap provided to us through the Charismatic Jesus the Christ. The church must follow the Spirit of Christ. It is to take seriously God's call as a church to be a community of the Spirit in the world and a community of the Spirit for the world.¹⁹

Today's objective is to incorporate an epistemological research strategy that includes a methodology specific to older adults' congregants, i.e., gender and age. I aim to reach gradual competency levels and comfort levels in operating digital devices by resources to assist older adults with these efforts. These efforts will avoid the proclivity of associating all older adults into general categories and groups. The dynamics pertain to specific cultures and customized programs that cater to entities based on demographics, infrastructures, and communities. I can accomplish this through observation, interactions, and hands-on experiences.

Today many older adults live alone or have little to no support accessing the internet to obtain additional resources for personal uses. COVID-19 will forever change yesterday's living standards, and the COVID-19 paradigm shift strips away the sense of normalcy that may not resume in the coming months or for years to come or a norm we

¹⁹ Eldin Villafane, *The Liberating Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: University Press of America, 1993), 196.

are never to see again. The reality is many older adults live alone and may continue to live alone for years to come.

Given that an increasing percentage of American adults already live alone, isolation could become an even greater problem the church will be called upon to address. This appears to be one of the reasons traditional churches that have generally been cautious about COVID restrictions are seeing older adults come back to in-person activities than younger families.²⁰

One of the most critical financial support for an older adult tech program will likely originate from donations and grants. Presently, digital devices can be attainable through direct connections within organizations, the community, and program resources. The transportation mode to transport older adults to and from the program(s) may be one of the program's most significant challenges depending upon location and financial support level.

Older adults need several types of devices to stay relevant, i.e., the current iPhone capabilities, FaceTime with Doctors for virtual diagnoses, and other means to improve their quality of life. As technological advances evolve, the resources offered as provided in this dissertation will provide additional opportunities. One of the ideas is to put together a prospectus outlining the program's objective, agenda, timeframe, cost, information technology support to elicit older adult participants for the program. This dissertation aims to present a revolutionary senior-centric technology ministry that will

²⁰ Mark Wingfield, "As the American population grows older, church ministries need to shift" *Baptist News Global*, entry posted October 18, 2010, https://baptistnews.com/article/as-the-american-population-grows-older-church-ministries-need-to-shift/#.YX8grOhKj_d. (accessed October 30, 2021).

generate multiple tech-savvy initiatives for older adults in every group, race, and demographics as a social norm.

My project will be a model designed to be replicated and tweaked as new knowledge surfaces, and we as human beings evolve. The Site Teams' input is both crucial and necessary from conception to implementation of the program. The value of my Site Team members and their feedback on my competencies is relevant. However, most importantly, their presence during the beginning, end, and assessment stages must be consistent for the program/ministries' success.

Again today, we are all faced with recognizing this new paradigm shift as a result of COVID-19. It is an honor to spearhead such a program. However, it is my personal belief that older adults do not have a voice. As a senior citizen Advocate for over 25 years, I believe that older adults are a vital part of the future of technology. Older adults have such a wealth of knowledge many take for granted. All that we can learn from our elders in biblical times and today can be in every new frontier. Knowledge is power. Knowledge births unique experiences, and new expertise shapes our future. There is so much yet to discover.

AN ONGOING NECESSITY: COMBINING THE UNDERPRIVILEGE

This program will provide continuous hope for older adults, our most valued commodity and viewed as such. It will continue the legacy of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr, a renowned and revered champion for Justice for the disenfranchised from all walks of life. By incorporating the social activism initiatives on behalf of older adults continuously as technology evolves, new age programs or initiatives designed specifically for older adults must change, and further information, services, enhanced programs that are currently unavailable to underprivileged older adults, many of whom I learned from both my

research and fieldwork have multiple disabilities as a result of aging must be made available. Older adults and people with disabilities were provided limited pandemic-related information with new, complex, and frequently changing terms. Everyone who disconnected from the society also had limited knowledge. Because of the biased information, it was difficult for them to access proper support systems, including emergency subsidies for marginalized older populations.²¹ How can we use an information technology program to assure many older adults would not have to deal with a challenge of a wide gap in navigating the basics with digital devices compared to most people?

UBC MINISTRY PROPOSAL: A YEAR-TO-THE-DAY

After identifying the problem, I discussed the matter with my senior pastor at Union Baptist Church of Stamford (UBC). I provided him with a proposal detailing my idea for an Older Adult Information Technology Ministry, including detailing the first yet critical steps in the process of the program. I find the most intriguing is how I identified the challenge almost a year-to-the-day when the United States first began its COVID-19 lockdown.

I submitted an older adult information technology ministry proposal to my pastor on March 15, 2019. (See Appendix B.)

COVID-19 PANDEMIC EFFECT: PROPABLE CAUSE

Part of the challenge for participants to be wholly engaged is getting older adults comfortable with learning the basics. The program must keep up with technology as newer systems emerge almost every six months. It is a challenge. I can accomplish this

²¹ Jang Soong-nang and Kim Chang-O, "Care Inequality among Older Adults during the COVID-19 pandemic" *National Center for Biotechnology Information*, entry posted December 28, 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7781961/> (accessed November 14, 2021).

challenge by staying up to date on Apps and other digital platforms through demonstrable straightforward mechanisms comprehensible for older adults regardless of race, economic status, geographical location, or physical limitations, or mental capacity. The goal is to demonstrate how every older adult can learn technology basics from the local churches to local communities and abroad.

Firstly, it appears some older adult programs are developed and implemented out of empathy. Or because someone forgot to include the mothers and fathers of the church. Secondly, when are older adults added to the developmental portion of a program? From my experience, I generally hear after or towards the end of the brainstorming phase of a ministry program, "what about the older adults." It never dawned on me until I analyzed the older adult communities and ministries of this overlooked group, how commonplace the mindset is when it comes to remembering to include older adults.

The COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc, and the commonly overused word of its unprecedented impact almost instantly changed the entire globe. Yet, it took a global pandemic for older adults to receive many overdue services they were never privy to or had limited access to. The pandemic gave probable cause to analyze the problem with former older adult ministries. As I delved deeper into examining all the complications surrounding the multiplicities of inadequate programs for older adults, the experience made advocating for older adults increasingly personal. I stand firm in my belief that all forms of social justice reform designed to improve the livelihood of older adults are undoubtedly warranted.

Therefore, the challenge is what are we going to do and continue doing about this undeniable probable? Corporative governance that can reflect the voices of vulnerable

populations might be the first step in supporting these populations. It is also vital to ensure a safe environment in a crisis and promote healthy aging equally. The multi-dimensional inequality of COVID-19 risks did not arise suddenly. Inequalities had emerged in various systems in our society even before the current pandemic situation. All citizens of every generation should participate in caring in solidarity with healthcare workers for promoting healthy aging equally in the pandemic era.²²

CHURCH MISSION TODAY: BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

Steven Bevens was a missionary for many years, and Bevens came to understand that mission work was not bringing people into the Church. Instead, the mission was getting the Church outside of itself. The Church still struggles to see how their strategies to spread the gospel must implement the technology by upgrading its infrastructure and continuously changing whenever needed to be more effective in reaching others.

What is the mission of the church today? Bevens expresses how the task is an ecstatic practice of the church getting outside itself.²³

And the church getting outside of itself includes embracing change. Each member should be able to comprehend the power of utilizing technology for missionary work where applicable. Suppose we are incapable of steering away from being narrow-minded. We cannot focus on creative and innovative ways to plant seeds to grow the church by moving away from ineffective strategies and missions that produce minimal results due to the fear of the unknown or the unfamiliar.

²² Jang Soong-nang and Kim Chang-O, "Care Inequality among Older Adults during the COVID-19 pandemic" *National Center for Biotechnology Information*, entry posted December 28, 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7781961/> (accessed November 14, 2021).

²³ Stephen Bevens, SVD, "*God Inside Out: Notes Toward a Missionary Theology of the Holy Spirit*," 2017, <https://sedosmission.org/old/eng/Bevens.html> (accessed February 7, 2019).

Getting outside of the church is challenging for most pastors and church leaders to accept. The church's mission is not conducive to four walls; we must accomplish the church's mission by any means necessary.

WE HAVE BECOME COMPLACENT: A CHANGE IN AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

The Holy Spirit is our guide. As John Paul II has said forcefully, the Spirit leads and shows us how we can accomplish the church's mission in unconventional ways as we evolve. New knowledge, the same task, is to go out into all the world by any means and bring the lost to Christ. The Church is not “sent” by God so much as it has *become* part of God’s embrace of the world—an embrace made flesh in Jesus, but accomplished already in the past, the present, and continuing presence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is indeed “the principal agent of mission.”²⁴ “In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.” (Eph. 1:13 NRSV).

Techniques and technology must do with the “how,” and theology must do with the “why.” The problem is that theologies often get lodged in older technologies that they then sacralize. Churches and their leaders oppose technology because it is “new” and thus opposed to the faith once delivered to the saints. Change is viewed as being opposed to faithfulness. We joke about this a lot, but it is painful. The seven last words of the church are “we have always done it this way.” Bevens calls for us to see the Spirit moving outside the church, outside the old ways, outside in the world where technological advances are happening at astonishing speed, especially in communication.²⁵ Within the

²⁴ Bevens, “God Inside Out.”

²⁵ Ibid.

church, predominately older adults are resistant to change. Technology is top of the list of things older adults fear. The ability of older adults to use digital solutions and tools is a crucial issue, because low adaptation to the digital era is a barrier in daily living that reduces quality of life, independence, autonomy, and mental health; additionally, such tools could effectively enhance medical care in older adults. Fear of technology is prevalent among older generations who deal with computers, complicated acronyms, or digital games.²⁶

A CHARISMATIC RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH: TRANSFORMATION

Church leadership should focus primarily on communication technologies. As much as I would like to cover all the bases of technology as it applies to the Church today, realistically, the field of technology is too broad to conceptualize effectively in a single pitch. However, we cannot steer away from the church mission, which is to spread Christianity to new converts and assist with the transformation of others and glorify God by proclaiming the gospel to the lost and by any and all-technological means to help with conversions.

Presented was the undoubted proof of the true Messiahship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who met the lost where they were, the poor, the meek, and the lowly in heart as prophesied. When the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’” Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits and had given sight to many who were blind. Luke states, “And he answered them, ‘Go and tell John

²⁶ Dina DiGiacomo, Jessica Ranieri, Meny D’Amico, Federica Guerra, and Domenico Passfiume, “Psychological Barrers to Digital Living in Older Adults: Computer Anxiety as Predictive Mechanism for Technophobia” *National Center for Biotechnology Information*, entry posted September 9, 2019, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6770433/>. (accessed November 15, 2021).

what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them.” (Luke 7:22 NRSV).

Today, technology is a crucial vehicle used as an implicit tool for spreading the Good News, preached to spiritually blind, lame, unclean, deaf, and the dead in Spirit. The Spirit manifests itself through cyberspace as well, and it is our responsibility as Christians to recognize today the Messianic signs of the Spirit's existence in cyberspace. According to Veli-Matti Karkkainen, the transforming power of the Spirit is evident at the beginning of the history of the Christian church.²⁷

Preparation is the first step, but the transformation is of a more comprehensive world initiative today than the start of the church from its inception.

Dyer cites the Calvin study as saying that technology is “for practical ends and purposes—there is always a goal in our use of technology and therefore in the technology itself and each individual tool. “The notion of a goal inherent to the tool is another aspect of the philosophical concept or doctrine of "entelechy." The Holy Spirit's power at work within all things moves them forward from within their dynamic and purpose to completion, hence the realization of possibility.

Of course, there is also the power of sinfulness, which seeks to thwart such a realization of the inner goal. We call it "corruptibility" and Newton's second law of thermodynamics, the law of entropy. But the Spirit of creation, the creative Spirit of God, is at work in the university, countering this law of entropy to give us new forms, new design, new being—the doctrine of the resurrection. I believe that the Holy Spirit is

²⁷ Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Pneumatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 32).

present in the charismatic renewal of the church. Villafane states that the Spirit's "charismatic" empowerment has been a singular emphasis... Pentecostalism has been recognized as a powerful force in evangelism, world missions, church growth, and spirituality²⁸

I say it is the power of the Holy Spirit that is working in us and working through us. As we continue to seek ways to embrace the challenge, we cannot deny the importance of discerning the Spirit continuously. The challenge goes beyond what we see today, it extends to what we do not see, and if we are in tune not only individually but collectively as the body of Christ, we will begin to see what the Spirit is trying to tell us all. Therefore, the challenge of this program is to help older adults with their fear of technology. Another aspect of the program's goal is to teach volunteers (as needed) the importance of being patient with older adults. And to empower older adults, thus reminding them of who they are, who's they are, and how critical their role is to God's kingdom.

²⁸ Villafane, *The Liberating Spirit*, 202.

CHAPTER 3 IMPLEMENTATION

A HISTORICAL TIME PERIOD: PRESENT REALIZATION

This dissertation offers meaningful insight into some of the challenges many older adults face with technology basics. When operating digital devices or streaming online, older adults who live alone have little or no assistance from patiently tolerant family members, government organizations, or church-affiliated people willing to assist them. The other portion of this dissertation incorporates some of today's valuable resources geared towards aiding older adults, their churches, and local communities with resourceful information to help improve the livelihood of older adults. The program includes resources for older adult congregants and abroad. Note these resources are frequently evolving along with today's technological advancements.

COVID-19 presented the realization that there is a critical need to provide easy-access information for seniors with or without an advance digital device. I experienced a spectrum of epistemological findings from this field study of disparaged to the privileged older adults' livelihood in today's rapidly evolving technological society.

The COVID-19 pandemic pointed what I thought was an ingenious Older Adult Information Technology Ministry into an antiquated project. Why? I did not fully recognize older adults' actual technological challenges until I began the implementation state as fieldwork objectives in a social distancing and minimal human contact new,

unusual way of human connection. As a result, I was forced to reevaluate my process, information assimilation, and my original plan of action for this project.

FROM DESIGNING THE PLAN WHILE FLYING IT TO RE-DESIGNING THE PLAN ON THE RUNWAY

The authors Herr/Henderson's illustration in "*The Action Research Dissertation*" outlines challenges and benefits of an action research dissertation. This book helped me best prepare my journey of participatory action research endeavors and proposed outcomes for my dissertation as a doctoral student. It is refreshing to read multiple examples that support why action research dissertations are intended to be different, needed, and rewarding on both ends of the spectrum.

Dissertation research aims to supply new knowledge that can be accessed and informative for years to come; however, there has never been a more crucial need for expert and personal epistemological facts based on one's interpretation. We are making history as we are experiencing this historic time. Taking an epistemological approach to research was my initial goal. Today's sociohistorical times are becoming more inclusive, beneficial for future action research dissertation endeavors. As Herr/Henderson exclaims, "Its use of autobiographical data characterizes action research. If, for example, the research question is about their professional practice or personal experience, researchers must study themselves."²⁹ This sense of discovery while uncovering leads to new knowledge not previously anticipated. Still, life brings unexpected changes, and the

²⁹ Kathryn Herr and Gary L. Anderson, *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*, Second Edition. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2015), 97.

COVID pandemic gave me as a doctoral student an opportunity to document regularly and contribute consistently to the new knowledge.

In summary, today, chapter 5, "Designing the Plan While Flying It: Proposing and Doing the Dissertation," takes on a broader meaning than ever anticipated. The goal has changed. COVID provides a game-changer like, it or not. Today the objective is to create an epistemological framework that provides a vivid view of PAR (Participatory Action Research) amid surreal and unprecedented times. What does that mean? It is like keeping records or a journal that is more of a diary on an intellectual level. Why? Doctoral students should write every intricate detail as if they were writing a personal diary; this is critical. An academic journal provides new knowledge formed every day we live to observe the current state of humanity and the new normal that has yet to unfold indeed – originally, our assignment geared us ready to design the plane while flying it. However, COVID-19 changed that approach. The new knowledge created today changed that concept to re-designing the plane on the runway.

What contributed to redesigning my project? The word “Unprecedented” was named People’s Choice 2020 word of the Year for starters. “Unprecedented” beat out “pandemic” by a small margin, according to John Kelly, senior research editor at Dictionary.com, and is defined by the site as “without previous instance; never before know or experienced; unexampled or unparalleled.”³⁰

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC: WORDS AND PHRASES

The list of words that changed the course of this project:

³⁰ Olivia Eubanks, “Unprecedented named People’s Choice 2020 Word of the Year by Dictionary.com” *ABC News Network*, entry posted December 16, 2020, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/unprecedented-named-peoples-choice-2020-word-year-dictionary/story?id=74735664> (accessed December 10, 2021).

- Unprecedented
- Pandemic
- Death Toll Is Now At...
- Insurrection
- Domestic Terrorism
- Social Distancing
- Black Lives Matter – Protest
- Protest
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion
- Food shortages
- Toiletry Shortages
- Mask Required
- Hand sanitizer
- Virtual Funerals
- Virtual Meetings
- Virtual Events
- Working Remotely
- Are You Vaccinated?
- Coronavirus Anxiety
- U.S. Gun Violence Increase
- Stimulus Checks

RESHAPE, RETHINK, AND REIMAGINE

My project was approved initially to create an in-person Older Adult Technology Ministry Program; however COVID-19 pandemic forced me to reshape, rethink and reimagine an alternative strategy. Therefore, I revised my challenge statement. And I incorporated a modified approach to interacting and assisting program participants.

ONE-ON-ONE'S: A COVID-19 ACTION RESEARCH DISCOVERY

During my one-on-one during the field study, I identified the following variations with older adults, which are my findings from my interactions.

- Age: Is only a number
- Motor-decline: Is both genetics and health related
- Cognitive Ability: Is centered around interest

My research findings helped me develop the concept that age, motor decline, and cognitive challenges do not mean they cannot minister or provide encouraging words and prayers for people. As the body of Christ in all capacities, we need to do things a little bit differently when working with the older adult population, but more importantly, be sensitive to those needs. I am passionate about working with older adult congregants and their communities.

Today, why field study instead of conventional implementation? In the harsh reality, Pre-COVID-19, I received predominately endearing affirmations of support for desiring to implement an older adult technology ministry. Responses ranged from “That’s so cute” to “How thoughtful of you.” It took a worldwide pandemic during this new age technological savvy world to illustrate the enormous risk social isolation has on the health and wellbeing of older adult citizens in a way that research shows are as harmful

as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.³¹ The dynamics of older adults in our congregation varies, however, during my research and the implementation stage of this project, I found myself primarily engaged with the single, lonely, and most deprived older adults at Union Baptist Church. It is an indisputable truth that older adults desire independence. As an older adult advocate, the project helped me to realize personal interactions with older adults are far more valuable and necessary than providing a list of resources. A senior adult technology program is critical and vital to the wellbeing of older adults today.

How can I anticipate creating an Information Technology Program for older adults when I cannot see them in person, and many have only a landline phone? How do I instruct older adults on basic computer skills during a pandemic? One of the best things COVID-19 produced as it pertains to this program is the opportunity to learn intricate details associated with the many complexities' older adults face when the world has turned its back on them. A critical discovery. I am faced with the following challenges in the middle of a pandemic and required to produce new knowledge. Unsuspectedly, new knowledge is exactly what I learned during an unprecedented time no man on earth has ever encountered during a digital age.

The Reality Complex, ranging from the real world to completely virtual environments, is being navigated by more people on more devices as Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality become commonplace. When Mixed Reality experiences become more commonplace the line between physical and virtual realities will become fundamentally blurred...With this evolution comes new means of creating, interacting, understanding, solving problems, and experiencing the world around us.³²

³¹ Human Resources & Services Administration, "The 'Loneliness Epidemic'" *HRSA.gov*, entry posted January 2019, <https://www.hrsa.gov/enews/past-issues/2019/january-17/loneliness-epidemic> (accessed July 6, 2019).

³² The Influences, "The Reality Complex: Our Connected Culture" *Ibbonline*, entry posted May 18, 2018, <https://www.lbbonline.com/news/the-reality-complex-our-connected-culture> (accessed December 9, 2021).

BASIC DYNAMICS OF OLDER ADULTS IN THE CHURCH

Whatever the new world around us looks like in the future, older adults are very much a part of mixed reality experiences no matter how it takes shape. An Information Technology Program for church ministry and its community should evolve as the world around us evolves.

During my conversation with my Site Team member, Phyllis Watson, she advised, “You have to remember your presentation when speaking to many older adults. Talk slow and prepare to repeat yourself.” I took the advice well as I can sometimes talk extremely fast. Although I am aware of the importance of speaking clearly and taking my time if necessary, I appreciated the reminder.

As indicated in Appendix B: Union Baptist Church: Ministry Proposal for an older adult technology program is primarily for the senior citizen community. Beginning with my general observations, the dynamics of the older adult congregation at Union Baptist Church of Stamford were predominantly women between the ages of 65 and 90+. I initially estimated approximately twenty-five members would attend.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, I had to limit the number of participants to five people and conduct the implementation of my program via one-on-one assistance and minimal in-person basic computer training. I was approved to move forward with five case study participants—the total comprised of four women and one male participant. The change made the implementation extremely challenging; however, very early in the implementation stage, I discovered that the COVID-19 Pandemic and social distancing added a layer of the challenges of getting older, feeling helpless, and alone even as part of the church community.

The following case study questions provided heartfelt details into some of the challenges the COVID-19 Pandemic posed on older congregants.

CASE STUDY PARTICIPANT QUESTIONS: A LIST OF CHALLENGES

#1: RESULTS – MOTHER BLANCH SUMPTER

- **What feelings did you express due to an inability to connect to the internet or view streaming church programs or services?**
 - *“I was somewhat disappointed that I could not. But then, I did not let it perturb me. I just did the best I could and went on with it. I knew I was not able to do it. And things like that beyond my control, I give it to the Lord and keep moving on. I try not to let things that are not earth-shaking discourage me; I turn it over to the Lord and keep moving on.”*
- **What other challenges did you encounter trying to connect to the internet?**
 - *“None really. I felt fine. I was just going with the flow. I profess to be a Christian, and I go with that because God has brought me through many challenges, and I know He will be there whenever I need him.”*
- **Did you experience any challenges obtaining assistance from family members with accessing the internet, using cell phone features, or operating other digital devices during this period?**
 - *“Some, but not regularly. Many were not nearby. Some tried to work with me over the phone. And some did not think of themselves as capable of helping. Most did not have time. Due to location work, it wasn’t that easy to get to me. They did not have that kind of time to offer. They can show her, but then she would need a follow-up, and it was not easy to get the help. They could not get to me and give me the time I needed to get accustomed to the internet.”*

- **Is there anything positive you gained while trying to access the internet during this COVID-19 Pandemic?**

- *“Well, I wouldn’t say I gained much during this time; I did what I had to do. it.” I wrote down everything needed for me to access church services, “Grief Ministry, Bible Study, Prayer Service, and Sunday Morning Service. It did not make sense to memorize the numbers; I just wrote them down and had them right at hand when needed. The experience is something new for me; it is unique to most seniors. But it would help if you used common sense. And thanks to that, the Lord gave me enough wisdom and common sense to work things out for my benefit. That’s why we have pen and paper. We had options. The length of time I have lived, I have gained wisdom. I put all my faith and trust in God”*

MY OVERALL EVALUATION OF MOTHER BLANCHE SUMPTER:

Mother Blanche Sumpter: “Memory sharp at 99 years old woman.”

Mother Sumpter has an uncanny memory for her age. We recently began setting up a time to review the Mobile App process. Due to the rise of the new variant Omicron, the additional implementation portion of my fieldwork study working with Mother Sumpter will have to be revisited later for safety reasons. At 99 years old and with a phenomenal memory, Mother Sumpter is a perfect candidate for this portion of the program. I pray that the opportunity to work with her on this Mobile App presents itself. It would be an honor.

I initially chose Mother Sumpter for this portion of the program to teach basic computer skills to older adults and teach Mother Sumpter how to create a Mobile App,

beginning with a prototype. I am determined to demonstrate that nothing is impossible with patience, no matter the age.

#2: RESULTS - REVEREND SYNETHIA C. EPPS

- **What feelings did you express due to an inability to connect to the internet or view streaming church programs or services?**
 - *“I was a little frustrated at first. I was bothered that it took a while to connect to live streaming services. It was frustrating not being able to do anything.”*
- **What other challenges did you encounter trying to connect to the internet?**
 - *“Zoom dial-in service was the primary way we received live streaming services and programs. I had to get familiar with the codes from the different church functions during the week. “I eventually went from not being on the internet to being able to gain access to the church streaming services, to finally gaining access. I had to get familiar with the codes. There were different codes for church functions. There were a lot of numbers and codes you needed to know for services each week. 1) Sunday morning service, 2) bible study, and 3) Prayer and Praise service. “*
- **Did you experience any challenges obtaining assistance from family members with accessing the internet, using cell phone features, or operating other digital devices during this period?**
 - *“The support I received from family was pretty average. It was frustrating initially, but when they had time, I did get some help. Not all the time, but I guess I can say that the help I received from my family was average.”*

- **Is there anything positive you gained while trying to access the internet during this COVID-19 Pandemic?**

- *“I went from not getting on the internet to being able to gain access to it.”*

MY OVERALL EVALUATION OF REVEREND SYNETHIA C. EPPS:

Reverend Synethia Epps: “A woman of God who was determined to continue preaching the word of God.”

Reverend Epps chuckles about inadvertently dialing, calling, and periodically face timing me on my cell number. Nonetheless, she learns well through repeated directives and repetitive steps for operating digital devices.

Reiterating to Reverend Epps, her ability to preach on Wednesday Night Praise and Worship Services has prompted the Holy Spirit to manifest. Reverend Epps has since regained spiritual strength and the will to allow the Holy Spirit to use her as she preaches a spirit-led sermon after becoming comfortable with digital devices and dialing in to listen to streaming church services.

In addition, Reverend Epps has agreed to fill in for me to preach during Wednesday Night Prayer and Praise Services. She often glorified God and gave Him praise for the opportunity to use her digital devices or call into the church to preach and fellowship during these challenging times.

Today, Reverend Epps uses her tablet and mobile phone frequently and comfortably. She is learning how to manage her devices more daily.

I learned the power of re-experiencing new revelations as Reverend Epps gave an extraordinary prayer during one of UBC’s special prayer services. Since the pandemic, it was the first time; Reverend Epps stood at the church podium to pray.

Jenice:

- *“Reverend Epps, I felt a strong anointing from your prayer, and it was powerful.”*

Reverend Epps:

- *“When I watch the video back, I said to myself, ‘I don’t know what came over me. I had a praise bubble.’” I said, “a praise bubble!” I like that phrase. I am going to use that. “A Praise Bubble” came over me. When the Holy Spirit uses you to pray with conviction and happiness in the Lord. It is a sudden occurrence.”*
I learned new words to express the work of the Holy Spirit, like “praise bubble.”

Today, Reverend Epps desires to continue to be used by God. To God be the Glory!

Reverend Epps has regained confidence to preach again.

Again, she began preaching at Union's Wednesday Night Prayer and Praise virtual service. She said, *“Well, I can speak; therefore, I can preach and continue doing the work God has called me to do.”?*

#3: RESULTS - REVEREND GERALDINE L. HARRIS:

- **What feelings did you express due to an inability to connect to the internet or view streaming church programs or services?**
 - *“For the most part, we were all learning together. I was learning and teaching my senior members at the same time. I felt overwhelmed.”*
- **What other challenges did you encounter trying to connect to the internet?**
 - *“I knew the complexities of my project as an older adult. I desired to explore alternative ways to stay connected to my church members. We had to be realistic too without infringing upon those who had computer skills.”*

- **Did you experience any challenges obtaining assistance from family members with accessing the internet, using cell phone features, or operating other digital devices during this period?**
 - *“I have an eighteen-year-old grandson. He has little patience with assisting me. Many times, instead of him teaching me, he gets frustrated and then just fixes the issue himself, and then he is done with helping me at that moment.”*
- **Is there anything positive you gained while trying to access the internet during this COVID-19 Pandemic?**
 - *“As I learn technology, I had also discovered how to circumnavigate programs when unforeseen connectivity issues plague our efforts. Many times we had to stop and not do anything.”*

MY OVERALL EVALUATION OF REVEREND GERALDINE L. HARRIS:

Reverend Geraldine L. Harris: “A woman with the will and tenacity.”

My experience with Reverend Harris is less complicated in the sense that "show and tell" works well for her, and the whole plate does not impede her desire to learn everything she can. Most churches had to learn the stark truth that convening indoors was less likely to happen as soon as most would have anticipated or preferred. As the novel COVID-19 pandemic continued to plague the world, many church organizations had to assemble virtually. Forced to confront the challenges of assisting congregants with joining services and programs on Zoom.

Reverend Harris is the Senior Pastor of Greater File Baptist Church in Harlem, New York. Although we are both seminarians matriculating through the halls of

academia at New York Theological Seminary, we have a great connection. It is an honor to assist Reverend Harris with any computer challenges and digital devices issue she may encounter. She agreed to share some of the experiences she encounters as, like many other church leaders, Reverend Harris is exploring newer ways members can worship, fellowship, and congregate virtually.

My frequent conversations with Reverend Harris included sharing our experiences connecting with older adults. As many had begun connecting virtually, connecting with older adults had taken on an entirely different approach. Telephone conversations to assist older adults, many of whom lived alone and did not have assistance or anyone they could obtain guidance from readily available as needed.

Reverend Harris:

- *"I was on the telephone helping one of my older adult members connect to Bible Study via Zoom Meeting platform. I asked one of my older adult congregants to mute her phone by pressing star and the number 6 on her phone. The woman replied, 'I don't see a star!' I then redirected the member by explaining that the asterisk on the phone is also known as a "star."*

Jenice:

- *"Reverend Harris, would you mind informing me of some other challenges you face with your older adult congregants during this pandemic?"*

Reverend Harris:

- *"Sometimes, working with older adults, comprehension is better than others. As a result, I sometimes don't tell them but demonstrate for them."*

Jenice:

- *“What are the age groups for the seniors you assist with technology the most?”*

Reverend Harris:

- *“The average age of these older adults I assist lately are between the age of 75 to 80 years of old. Critical information depends on the group of seniors you are assisting. I learned during this experience that some things we take for granted are crucial and challenging for many seniors.”*

#4: RESULTS – DEACON DESSIE JENKINS:

- **What feelings did you express due to an inability to connect to the internet or view streaming church programs or services?**
 - *“Well, I wished I had someone to help me. But no one could not get to me, and I was not able to get to anyone. That is the part that worried me the most.”*
- **What other challenges did you encounter trying to connect to the internet?**
 - *“Well, none all that much. My church did not have a streaming service set up when they shut everything down. Live streaming happened weeks later. There wasn’t any church until then.”*
- **Did you experience any challenges obtaining assistance from family members with accessing the internet, using cell phone features, or operating other digital devices during this period?**
 - *“It was really frustrating not being able to get the family to help me with the phone. I could not go out, and I could not go to anyone. Everything shut down, and I could not get anyone to help me. I had plenty of time to learn, but I couldn’t go to get help. That was the worst thing about*

COVID-19 for me, and not connecting the church, but I couldn't go anywhere. It was the worst part." Especially seniors that live alone. I could not learn or go around anyone; I had time to learn but couldn't.

- **Is there anything positive you gained while trying to access the internet during this COVID-19 Pandemic?**

- *"Oh yeah, well, I knew I would be able to read the bible, which was better because I was communicating directly to God. I spiritually grew. Just reading the word touched me more. That was the best part. I grew closer to God."*

MY OVERALL EVALUATION OF DEACON DESSIE JENKINS:

Deacon Dessie Jenkins: "A man confined to location challenges – grows closer to God."

Preparations to meet with Deacon Dessie Jenkins are still ongoing, as his busy scheduling conflicts with mine. We were able to meet in person only twice during this period. Our limited interactions brought challenges due to his work schedule as an older adult forced into employment to live within his means. Meeting scheduling conflicts and rescheduling persists. I will provide more information in the next coming weeks.

#5: RESULTS – REVEREND MANDIE.R.RICHARDSON:

- **What feelings did you express due to an inability to connect to the internet or view streaming church programs or services?**

- *"I am not worried about connecting to the internet. I watched all of my programs on T.V. I have a lot going on right now. I am watching religious programs on T.V."*

- **What other challenges did you encounter trying to connect to the internet?**
 - *“I don’t have any challenges. I live alone, and I don’t need the internet*
- **Did you experience any challenges obtaining assistance from family members with accessing the internet, using cell phone features, or operating other digital devices during this period?**
 - *“One of my children is getting me a cell phone. They will show me. I will learn then.*
- **Is there anything positive you gained while trying to access the internet during this COVID-19 Pandemic?**
 - *“I don’t need it.”*

MY OVERALL EVALUATION OF REVEREND MANDIE.R.RICHARDSON:

Reverend Mandy R. Richardson: “Smiling Again.”

Reverend Richardson suffered a stroke in 2019, several months before the coronavirus pandemic prompted social distancing statewide guidelines. Fortunately, Reverend Richardson resided in the same condominium complex as I, making the field study work easier. We had multiple conversations on ministry. As she recovered from the stroke, I expressed to Reverend Richardson the importance of using our voice to continue ministry work. And how God graces us with the gift of waking up with full cognitive abilities is another opportunity to minister each day. Per our conversation, Reverend Richardson and I joined Wednesday Night Prayer Service. She prayed, gave testimonies, sang worship songs, and members on the virtual zoom worship service call.

When the opportunity arose, I visited Reverend Richardson to show her how to access Union Baptist Church of Stamford's Sunday Worship streaming services and other church services by creating and providing the following a large print "Go-To" sheet. Part of the Older Adult Information Technology Ministry curriculum will include 12 points or more significant for older adults. A larger font of 12 points or higher is especially vital as many older adults have limited computer skillsets. Choosing a font of at least 16 pixels or 12 points is essential. If any of your users are older adults, consider using an even larger font size-19 pixels or 14 points. Small font size is more challenging to read, especially for users with limited literacy skills and older adults.³³ I created zoom meeting dial-in numbers in significantly larger font points. (See Appendix C.) Many older adult congregants complained of the challenges with the number. Today, many churches, including Union Baptist Church of Stamford, changed their zoom meeting settings to include a 7-digit dial-in number to access their streaming services.

Reverend Richardson:

- She asked, "*Why are there so many numbers to select?*"

Dialing more than seven numbers is challenging for some older adults. Seven digits are more accessible for most people to remember. Telephone engineers created a 7-digit system for "all number calling" to expand their pool of possible number combinations. The first three digits would correspond to a particular phone service provider, and the last four digits would remain as a personal calling code. The 7-digit system made phone

³³ OASH, "Use a readable font that's at least 16 pixels" *Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion*, entry posted June 8, 2016, <https://health.gov/healthliteracyonline/display/section-3-3/> (accessed December 14, 2021).

numbers both distinguishable enough from one another and more accessible to remember³⁴

Older adults considered “low on the totem pole, are the disparaged group of seniors with motor decline and cognitive challenges, and they generally have fewer resources. For many, the simple task we take for granted, such as dialing more than seven numbers, can be challenging or overwhelming.

Initially, I presumed the question of “why are there so many numbers to select” had to do with the client expecting less completed means to connect. Many older adults struggle with touch screens due to a condition called leathery fingers...mastering new technology is often complicated as older adults have no experience using technology as a baseline. Older adults generally have a lesser frame of reference to absorb new knowledge.³⁵ It was not until I began the implementation phase and fieldwork clients clarified this vocation's relevancy.

On August 23, 2021, Case #5's family member mentioned how she could start allowing her loved one to view the church-streamed services even though, in the past, Reverend Richardson may have been apprehensive about how technology would benefit the church.

According to chapter 6 of Ernest T. Stringer's book, *Action Research*, communication should happen regularly. There should be ongoing communication by means available with Site Team members, stakeholders, and pertinent

³⁴ Jenny Dempsey, “History Lesson: All About Phone Numbers” *Numberbarn*, entry posted July 1, 2018, <https://www.numberbarn.com/blog/lesson-on-phone-numbers/> (accessed December 9, 2021).

³⁵ No Isolation, “Why do many seniors have trouble using technology?” *Komp, The one button computer*, entry posted May 2020, <https://www.noisolation.com/research/why-do-many-seniors-have-trouble-using-technology> (accessed December 9, 2021).

participants during this process. During this global pandemic, the regularity of communication is the driving force since people cannot meet in what used to be normal circumstances.

Stringer states that facilitators should communicate with each participant regularly and organize simple ways with similar or related tasks that can display ongoing interest. Such interactions may take the form of prearranged regular visits, telephone calls.³⁶ Certain aspects of this process have fostered more straightforward ways of communicating, even during social distancing.

The environments that would generally be conducive to implementation have changed. Utilizing the site team members for this stage has also changed. Although these circumstances have halted, it has not eliminated the need to think creatively. During this time of mandated social distancing, as the possibility of a mutated virus looms, the threat of a mutated version of Coronavirus could potentially change human interaction for years to come.

What would a constructive plan of action look like today? This action plan below was devised with the expectation and hoped that things would return to normal within a few months.

³⁶ Ernest T. Stinger, *Action Research*, Fourth Edition. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2014), 176.

RESOURCES: A NEED FOR ACCESSIBILLITY

Technology should not make older adults feel useless. Instead, when an older adult is ready to accept technology as a necessary change, technology helps older adults transform to higher, better digital self-expressions of themselves. This project proves to be imperative in many ways, particularly during the calamities we face today with the novel virus COVID-19. This program represents a deeper view of older adults' many challenges before the COVID-19 pandemic, during, and after. It will exemplify how this unforeseeable and unpredictable pandemic significantly impacted older adults.

This program is still ongoing and there is no telling what it will metamorphose into by February 2022. We learned in the recent days how the world is not out of the woods, as the recent Omicron COVID-19 variant is a reminder of this fact.

- The recent Delta variant spreads more quickly than other variants.
 - Nearly all variants circulating the United States respond to treatment with FDA-authorized monoclonal antibody treatments.
- The more recent Omicron variant spreads faster than other variants, including Delta.
 - Some monoclonal antibody treatments may not be as effective against infection with Omicron.³⁷

Resources for older adults should always be readily available. Unlike the Yellow Pages and information technology program for older adults, it should be easily accessible. Not every older adult has access to Apps or other forms of digital communication. At

³⁷ CDC, "What You Need to Know About Variants" *Center for Disease Control and Prevention*, entry posted December 1, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/about-variants.html> (accessed December 10, 2021).

least, that is the situation currently. Therefore, I included a list of resources, and learning opportunities for older adults. Churches, family members, and local community associations will find these resources accommodating.

Many ministry leaders would say older adults are relevant to ministry, but that is not how many older adults feel. Before, during, and likely after the COVID-19 pandemic ends, many older adults may nevertheless feel:

- Unnecessary,
- Undesirable,
- Irrelevant,
- Slow,
- Sedentary,
- Out of touch,
- Lonely,
- Tired,
- Fragile,
- Tech-illiterate,
- Ignorant,
- Declining,
- Hopeless,
- Intolerant, and
- Waiting to die.

One of the most interesting studies I found included Research Gate study in 2020 which included 100 older people between the ages of 60 and 86 years with a mean age of

69.38 years. Of the elderly respondents, 24% reported being afraid to use new technological devices and 43.4% reported fear related to damaging the devices.³⁸

I created an alternative, relatable concept based on the Research Gate data. One concept I presented a character picture of the brain³⁹ used to explain the functional aspect of the iPhone Operating System (IOS) of iPhone or android mobile apps. The other character picture is of a friendly-faced cell phone⁴⁰ used to assist with minimizing the fear of digital devices and the fear of handling digital devices. Also, both friendly-faced character illustrations helped me begin the lesson on a lighter note. This simple methodology proved to be an effective in generating positive responses during a teaching session using photos of smiling cartoon facial feature. (See Appendix D.)

The character pictures are not only used to assist older adults with grabbing the concept of creating a Mobile App Prototype, but to support the lessons and provide older adults with an opportunity to let their guards down during the session. Frontiers in Psychology investigated the recognition of facial emotional expressions in cartoon faces. The results revealed the presence of a happiness advantage in cartoon faces.⁴¹

³⁸ Titel Negru, "Pension System Methodology For Senior Citizens" *Research Gate*, entry posted April 2016, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319228746_Pension_System_Methodology_For_Senior_Citizens (accessed June 29, 2020).

³⁹ Marta Figueiredo, "Late-onset Pompe Patients Show No Major Brain, Cognitive Deficits in Study" *Pompe Disease News*, entry posted January 25, 2022, <https://pompediseasenews.com/2022/01/25/late-onset-pompe-patients-no-major-brain-cognitive-deficits-study/> (accessed March 1, 2022).

⁴⁰ Can Stock Photo, "Blue Humanized Smartphone With Funny Face Waving Hand And Saying Hi. Cartoon Character" *Canstockphoto*, entry posted 2020, <https://www.canstockphoto.com/blue-humanized-smartphone-with-funny-63068296.html> (accessed March 1, 2022).

⁴¹ Adrian K. Davison, "The Influence of Key Features on Recognition of Emotion in Cartoon Faces" *Frontiers in Psychology / Emotion Science*, entry posted August 10, 2021, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.687974/full> (accessed March 30, 2022).

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH

BEFORE THE 2020 PANDEMIC: A RAPIDLY CHANGING NECESSITY

Early in this Doctor of Ministry (DMIN) Program, I knew that my approach might transform over these three years. I was sure there was a possibility I might tweak this program multiple times before finalizing it. Thus, it was no surprise to me how Sensing notes that this program would become another animal.⁴² I did not initially embrace the idea of falling into anyone's category. Nevertheless, Sensing was correct, and I fell into the category of “An Analytical DMIN Pursuant.” Well, Sensing was accurate. As it turns out, my investigative nature led me to see how older adults are disregarded in this tech-savvy age far more significant than I had initially presumed. There must be a combined effort to merge a tangible straightforward mechanism for older adults to navigate ANY digital device or platform via education on basic functionalities.

Another one of the complexities noted by Sensing is choosing a topic. Sensing states that an issue that emerges from the congregational context fulfills the intent of the DMIN degree.⁴³ What drives my passion is the success of those positively affected by this ministry is the fulfillment I seek to obtain upon the implementation and its tangible changes. Most importantly, the work of the church and the worldwide Christian

⁴² Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 2.

⁴³ Ibid, 4.

ministries that are diligently staying the course includes older adults. Sensing notes, Christ is the primary reason for being in ministry in the first place.⁴⁴ The bible says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit," (Matt. 28:19 NRSV). The focus and the purpose should never lose traction as the church's work is ongoing and crucial to kingdom work and kingdom building. My goal is to speak up for older adults of all ages, as many live longer lives.

According to Baptist News Global, but the significant shifts in life expectancy already are visible, the bureau explains: "Between 1960 and 2015, life expectancy for the total population in the United States increased by almost ten years from 69.7 years in 1960 to 79.4 years in 2015. Looking ahead, gains to total life expectancy are projected to increase only 6.1 years from 2016 to 2060. By 2060, total life expectancy in the United States is projected to reach an all-time high of 85.6 years. Since 1960, the largest gains in life expectancy occurred between 1970 and 1980 — an increase of about three years from 70.8 to 73.7 years." It's not just centenarians that will be filling church pews by then but also a larger number of adults 85 to 99. The 85-plus population is expected to grow 200% by 2060.⁴⁵

I certainly agree with Sensing that my voice should be evident throughout the writing process.⁴⁶ There is nothing better than to speak your truth. I included the conceptual framework, which is the theological and theoretical foundations. I concur that every step of this process is designed for someone to replicate without comprehensive challenges from understanding the DMIN student's process or lack, therefore. I pray that my Action Research Dissertation uncovers new understanding and benefits older adult ministries and communities.

⁴⁴ Sensing, *Qualitative*, 4.

⁴⁵ Mark Wingfield, "As the American population grows older, church ministries need to shift" *Baptist News Global*, entry posted October 18, 2010, https://baptistnews.com/article/as-the-american-population-grows-older-church-ministries-need-to-shift/#.YX8grOhKj_d. (accessed October 30, 2021).

⁴⁶ Sensing, *Qualitative*, 31.

There are multiple points made in Sensing's book. He illustrates another essential practice of this DMIN program: incorporating the Four Core Ethical Principles Guide Research Practices. The typical list includes non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy (for self-determination), and justice.⁴⁷ As an Action Research participant, I understood during the onset of this DMIN program the importance of diversifying and how other intellectual traditions can be helpful as the evolution of both the church and secular communities are rapidly changing, and thus multiple traditions and knowledge of Action Research strategies should be taken into consideration.

OLDER ADULTS: WORSHIP, RELEVANCY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

My research questions materialized because of the passion for older adults that I have developed over 25 years. Many programs for older adults today are antiquated or non-existent. Although today, we are communicating, worshiping, and fellowshiping via virtual means, today's calamities merely shed light on an issue of the importance of incorporating older adult information technology ministries all over the globe. Not every older adult person has the accessibility of family or friends that are patient enough to work with them on digital devices or connect via teleconferencing.

The Hebrew Bible teaches of the importance of the role of the elderly in forming the early church. The elderly is as relevant today as they were in biblical times. Yet, today, the elderly community, also referred to as the older adult community, is forced to find alternate means to worship. Even simpler methodologies to engage by teleconferencing can also be a challenge for them. However, Facebook Live, web-based

⁴⁷ Sensing, *Qualitative*, 32.

video conferencing like Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype, and more can discourage older adults from participating.

This program aims to incorporate elements of social activism strategies used by Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. to protect disenfranchised older adults often forgotten and neglected.⁴⁸ The objective is also to shed light on the vital role older adults have in the church community. According to the Hebrew and Christian oral traditions, the elders had a significant role in spreading and maintaining the faith in ancient biblical times. According to W. Randolph Tate, this "oral period" was a period in which the stories and other forms were preserved and circulated, eventually developing into traditions that were then passed on from generation to generation.⁴⁹

Most churches must devise a technology infrastructure that incorporates an Older Adult Technology Ministry to prepare older adults for the unexpected, uncontrollable, and inevitable. Thus, prompting us today to recognize this new paradigm shift because of COVID-19 and the need to create an Action Training Movement or the likes of. Rev. William W. C. Ashley Sr. notes in “*Learning to Lead: Lessons in Leadership for People of Faith*,” that the Action Training Movement or church-based urban ministry – encouraged direct engagement in and systematic reflection on the inner working of the social, political, and economic systems⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Joshua K. Wright, Ph.D, Abernathy: An Online Magazine for Black Men. *Abernathy*, entry posted October 23, 2017, <https://abernathymagazine.com/the-king-and-prince-of-abyssinian-reflections-on-adam-clayton-powell-sr-and-jr/> (accessed May 11, 2020).

⁴⁹ Randolph W. Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, Third Edition. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 281.

⁵⁰ William W. C. Ashley, *Leading to Lead: Lessons in Leadership for People of Faith* (Nashville, TN: Skylight Path, 2013), 109.

I based my research upon the need for Older Adult Information Technology ministries and any program designed to improve the livelihood and empower older adults to remain relevant to the faith, thus glorifying God, for they too remain relevant to the body of Christ.

DIGITAL DIVIDE: A CRY TO CONTINUE THE LEGACY

What is the nature of social activism strategies used by Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. to continue the legacy of Adam Clayton Powell, Sr.? And how the creation for this legacy which began at The Abyssinian Baptist Church, prevailed by a functionalist perspective. This progress promotes commonality by boldly confronting the hegemonic undiplomatic political systems deprived of the social content institutions lacked to protect older adults.

As a self-proclaimed older adult advocate, protecting older adults is critical; I find the best description that encompasses social activism approaches used by Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. was to exemplify the importance of preserving his Father, Adam Clayton Powell, Sr.'s legacy. By providing hope for older adults. There was no separation when it came to social justice. These phenomenal men stood in the gap. By standing firm, getting in the arena, and taking a stand on behalf of the marginalized. Although older adults, being filled with wisdom, they are the most forgotten and disparaged groups, especially within the black community. Today, for me, the invisible digital divide creates a desperate cry to assist and educate older adult technology ministries within the church and local communities where possible. According to the National League of Cities, schools and businesses being forced to close due to the spread of COVID-19 pose significant challenges for cities, towns, and villages. Much of the workforce and education system going strictly online is a severe disadvantage for Americans without a

stable or reliable connection to the Internet. Without active local involvement, American communities and neighborhoods are at risk of increasing the digital divide.⁵¹

Both Powell Sr. and Jr. viewed older adults as the most valued commodity within a community. Thus, Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., provided the platform for ministry and community work. McMillian captures Powell Sr.'s journey as pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church, the largest, wealthiest, and second oldest Baptist congregation in New York City; Adam Clayton Powell Jr. succeeded his father, who had retired after 29 years. He would serve Abyssinian until 1971, retiring a year before his death. Becoming the eighteenth Pastor of a mainly conservative congregation in Harlem did not cause Powell Jr. to moderate his carefree lifestyle. He became more defiantly determined to live life on his terms while using his church platform to champion his social action plan.⁵² If anything, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.'s mastermind, a systematic movement, reflects a functionalist perspective in the church for the greater community.

Further learning led to the findings of Paulo Freire's courageous acts and the highly inductive process in which his participation in social action was a utilitarian movement that changed the livelihood for generations to come. Most astoundingly, was his ability to risk imprisonment, to incorporate important entities from the United Nations to the World Council of Churches. According to Herr and Anderson, Paulo Freire's actions are an excellent example of the effectiveness of participatory research to

⁵¹ National League of Cities, "*Vulnerable Populations*," <https://covid19.nlc.org/resources/resources-by-topic/vulnerable-populations/> (accessed October 31, 2021).

⁵² Lea E. Williams, *Adam Clayton Powell Jr.: The Uses and Abuses of Charismatic Power*. In *Servants of the People -The 1960's Legacy of African American Leadership* (New York, NY: Pakgrave-Macmillan, 2009), 123-140.

demonstrate Frere's vision that forced these interrelationships between the people (the oppressed) and the environment for which they were exposed to.⁵³

This level of social action ultimately led to educational reform for Brazilians. Today, the Freirean Approach is still viewed as a "thematic research project." Currently, its paradigm effect on social action is still trending. This is yet another example of the need for pertinent social reform in all areas where any group is treated unjustly and are helpless and deprived.

The continuance of his Father's legacy became Adam Clayton Powell, Jr's course of action, but in his own right. Adam Clayton Powell Jr. is a renowned and revered champion for justice for the disenfranchised from all walks of life – older adults in particular. This was a task that became his livelihood both as a Reverend and a politician.

Today's technologically savvy world poses no difference to this approach. The methodologies may have changed, but the expected outcome remains the same. From theological scholars to secular, educated people fighting for justice to prevail includes continuously incorporating social activism initiatives on behalf of our older adults on a continuous basis. As technology evolves, new age programs or initiatives designed specifically for older adults require variations to help empower them.

Studies have shown that the increase of older adult population is vastly growing. In 1900, only 4% of Americans were age 65 or older. Today, more than 16% of the population is age 65 or older.⁵⁴

⁵³ Herr and Anderson, *The Action*, 18.

⁵⁴ Mark Wingfield, "As the American population grows older, church ministries need to shift" *Baptist News Global*, entry posted October 18, 2010, https://baptistnews.com/article/as-the-american-population-grows-older-church-ministries-need-to-shift/#.YX8grOhKj_d. (accessed October 30, 2021).

When it comes to teaching older adults how to navigate the basics, even the fundamentals require an enormous amount of patience, of course, depending on the older adult. Fortunately, I began advocating for older adults after obtaining my first Job working in a Geriatric home shortly after graduating college. Years later, I never realized that I would develop a more senior adult technology ministry and begin a movement to encourage older adults and their families of the importance of patient fairs in learning and to teach technological basics to older adults.

Most importantly, my program is metamorphosing into a different type of social activism. Today, it is inevitable empowering older adults would undoubtedly involve changing the way things are concerning assisting older adults with high-tech systems of any form. Today, as with social activism displayed by Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., this COVID-19 Pandemic forces the need for change. Older adults are faced with a real unforeseen challenge. Today, an approach to continue the legacy of Adam Clayton Power, Jr. is by appropriately protecting marginalized older adults.

Protections are warranted to educate the fundamentals of operating digital devices for this marginalized group and because the same disregarded group is living longer. Baptist News Global exclaims just four years later, by 2034, the Census Bureau projects that older adults will outnumber children for the first time in U.S. history. By 2030, “because of population aging, immigration is projected to overtake natural increase (the excess of births over deaths). After 2030, these same trends will continue to magnify. Increased life expectancy — despite the ravages of COVID-19 — is a present reality. Think about the number of 80- and 90-year-olds who remain vibrant parts of

congregational life in a way that would have been unusual 50 years ago. Think also about the number of people who celebrate 100th birthdays and are still going strong.⁵⁵

A pandemic or any other unpredicted occurrence locally, nationally, or globally should not derail social action designed to protect our vulnerable older adults across the globe. Instead, the action research dissertation requires me to work through the stages of this process, as they unfold. At some points, I find myself working seemingly backward to solidify or build interpersonal relationships with older adults, who are more appreciative of the guidance and accepting than ever before.

THE VALUE OF PATIENCE: A COMMON DENOMINATOR

From an organizational development and learning approach to Action Research, I am naturally compelled to include real-life situations during this process. For it is the summary of socio-philosophical information obtained in Herr and Anderson's book about the impact of the growing human relations and organizational development...⁵⁶ In my view, this influences constant organizational learning that is undoubtedly effective and transformational. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect how the importance of real-life situations would become the steering mechanism of this Older Adult Information Technology Ministry. I agree with Herr and Anderson that action learning, like other forms of reflective practice, is considered research.⁵⁷ I believe that action learning is a discipline that most people utilize in their daily life experiences intentionally or unintentionally.

⁵⁵ Mark Wingfield, "As the American population grows older, church ministries need to shift" *Baptist News Global*, entry posted October 18, 2010, https://baptistnews.com/article/as-the-american-population-grows-older-church-ministries-need-to-shift/#.YX8grOhKj_d. (accessed October 30, 2021).

⁵⁶ Herr and Anderson, *The Action*, 12.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 16.

I am without a doubt adamant about championing on behalf of educating older adults on the fundamentals in this digital age. During the one-on-one field studies and my research, I have learned how patience is the common denominator for the student and the teacher for an Older Adult Technology Ministry and program, whether it is a storefront church, a mega-church, or any informal training session for older adults. Research shows that if anyone desires to assist older adults with learning or navigate any digital device, a lack of patience will discourage both the student and teacher.

The best way to communicate with older adults is through patience. Ekua Hagan noted exercising patience and compassion as follows. Patience and understanding are often needed when dealing with the elderly. Physical challenges, slow movement, forgetfulness, neediness, and apathy are just some of the behaviors you might encounter. Sometimes it's easy to lose patience and become frustrated. One might even be tempted to give up and walk away.⁵⁸

Many older adults claim they have no one to teach them the fundamentals of operating digital devices. Research shows that many older adults can grasp, create, and teach others "How-To" for using and navigating websites, social media platforms, and developing programs. For the bible says, "He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age;" (Ruth 4:15 NRSV). Pre-COVID-19, there was less relevancy expressed for Older Adult Technology Programs.

My first master's degree was in Organizational Management and Human Services. During my studies in my second master's degree program in Religious Leadership

⁵⁸ Hagan Ekua, "How to communicate with difficult seniors and older adults" *Psychology Today*, entry posted December 7, 2014, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/communication-success/201412/how-communicate-difficult-seniors-and-older-adults> (accessed October 31, 2021).

Management at New York Theological Seminary, I first discovered the importance of being a transformational leader. Many secular and religious programs, organizations, or institutions that gave minimal emphasis to Older Adult Technology Programs pre-COVID-19, are now viewing older adults through a different set of lenses. Groups include programs that no longer discriminate against older adults as in the past.

All-inclusive programs today consist of some form of transformational leadership skill sets, whether consciously or unconsciously. I feel compelled to act, perspicuously vocalizing how I too have elevated my focus on doing whatever it takes to include activities during this program, which sounds the alarm on any program that does not have some element of older adult technology when older adults are included.

The height of the 2020 pandemic produced new facts, creating new knowledge, the value of reframing from antiquated thought processes regarding the fear older adults had of technology - to illiterately challenged mindsets birth from the legitimate concerns regarding operating digital devices.

One major benefit of the implementation stage of this program was going from initially an in-person ten or more older adult participants to fieldwork consisting of one-on-one interactions, which created real-life challenges, concerns, revelations on why older adults are far deserving of continuous assistance, not due to their age, but due to the capabilities of any willing older adult, in any program when the teacher is both passionate and patient.

An Older Adult Information Technology ministry produces a multi-level transformational aspect, and a more hands-on approach is needed both in-person. It virtually forces me to think about my plan for the Doctor of Ministry program related to

my next steps. These next steps will affect me by increasing my God-given passion for assisting older adults. I believe that older adults will be transformed from this program as well. As some churches began in-person services, it is the older adults that presently attend the most. Isolation could become an even greater problem church will be called upon to address. This appears to be one of the reasons traditional churches that have generally, been cautious about COVID restrictions see more senior adults come back to in-person activities than young families.⁵⁹

AN UNPRECEDENTED TIME: REVISED PLAN-OF-ACTION

There is a mixture of approaches to express the need of an Older Adult Technology Ministry. Many of which are outlined in this dissertation. But let's start with an unprecedented change of plans. During this COVID-19 Pandemic, there has now become a limited number of tactics I can use to forge ahead. I had to revise my initial plan of action as COVID-19 forced millions to stay indoors for a period. Unfortunately, many older adults were left home with little or no resources or assistance during this unprecedented time. How did elders from ancient biblical times go from being crucial to the spread and maintenance of the genesis of the ecclesia to irrelevant in the minds of many, whether consciously or unconsciously?

I believe older adults were relevant then as they are now to the ministry. Scripture tells us, "Even to your old age I am He, even when you turn gray, I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save." (Isa. 46:4 NRSV). Suppose we support by recognizing the common denominator, which simply is to be patient in a fast-paced,

⁵⁹ Mark Wingfield, "As the American population grows older, church ministries need to shift" *Baptist News Global*, entry posted October 18, 2010, https://baptistnews.com/article/as-the-american-population-grows-older-church-ministries-need-to-shift/#.YX8grOhKj_d. (accessed October 30, 2021).

technological savvy, digital society. In that case, we can fully realize the value of patience. If patience is not exercised, addressed, embraced, and managed, older adults' risk continually losing their independence. COVID-19 produced discipline needed to embrace technological advances despite many older adults' lack of confidence and resistance to change.

Like many researchers, evolutionary experiences accompany acquired knowledge, which often continuously alters or increases theories and practices. The more I study, I often change my mind or see things from different perspectives. The original plan was to generate multiple teaching sessions and provide convenient settings and forums for older adults. The interactions would have provided a level of connectivity and group activity conducive to a sociocultural atmosphere for an Older Adult Information Technology Ministry. And the collaborative discussions from forum assignments likely benefits all participants. Although that goes without saying when it comes to acquiring knowledge, I now understand the importance of the "forum" assignments.

The forum assignments are also utilized as a collaborative narrative for this type of Action Research program. Herr and Anderson note how the advantage of collective histories is that participants can comment on each other's reports and push beyond the more superficial level of narrative observation toward a deeper environment during COVID-19 should never hinder ministry work. This is a valuable lesson learned if preparatory preventative measures must include an emergency action plan, whether the Older Adult Information Technology Program is in a small church or a mega-church.

BIBLICAL TRADITION MEETS MODERN INNOVATION: LET WISDOM SPEAK

What was the elders' role in the Hebrew Bible to spread and maintain faith and its relevancy to the early church's formation? Although the word “elders” in the Hebrew

Bible generally referenced male leaders in the community. To best describe the elder's role in maintaining the faith compared to today, one must consider the practices and traditions. In the First Testament class at New York Theological Seminary Winter 2019, I learned how one of the methodologies of biblical criticism is "Tradition Criticism," also referred to as "Tradition History." The elder's role was to keep the tradition alive.

As Professor Han taught us, according to Tradition Criticism, biblical passage reflects a tradition handed down from earlier times. It is also known as Traditionsgeschichte or Überlieferungsgeschichte. It communicated the process of the role of elders according to ancient teachings. It noted the importance of keeping tradition and its formality in an orderly form. One had to do with moral teachings relevant to the culture, practice, and biblical principles. We learn in the book of Job, "I said, 'Let days speak, and many years teach wisdom.'" (Job 32:7 NRSV). Professor Han further explains the compilation of ethical teachings of the Rabbinic Jewish tradition. According to the instructions, one such anthology of moral education is the collection principles associated with the Rabbinic Jewish belief. One such collection is the Pirke Avot.

In Pirke Avot 1:1 it states, "Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Yehoshua, and Yehoshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets transmitted it to the Men of the Great Assembly."⁶⁰

We all know there were no computers or other means of communication other than scrolls and stones. Ethical teachings transmitted from remembrance were traditions passed down to generations. Professor Han also explained how tradition, which is the transmission process, allows us today to gaze into the way traditum or tradita is

⁶⁰ Jin H. Han, "*First Testament*" (lecture, New York Theological Seminary, January 22, 2019).

transmitted.⁶¹ This program is designed to illustrate how older adults are critical today and in ancient biblical times. Over decades the reliance on conveniences has intensified, and the respect of older adults has seemingly diminished.

Today, we can expound on the notion of assisting older adults with new-aged technology so they too can continue their role as in the Hebrew Bible spreading and maintaining the faith today. Through technological means, the Older Adult Technology Ministry, which today is another form of traditum, passes information to the next generation, a role no less relevant today than it was in Biblical times. Psalm 92:12-14 tells us, "The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God in old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap." (Ps. 92:12-14 NRSV).

The role of older adult congregants is no less critical today. The etymology of "technology" comes from the Greek word *technē* and is translated as either craft or art. The most important use of the nature of *technē* is to illustrate points about the coming to be of the universe.⁶² Since *technē* is related to the emergence of the universes' beginnings, Parry notes that the Greeks labeled this belief of rationality the "logos" (the underlying principle of rationality that orders the universe). Plotinus holds that Nous gives rise to the rational principle (*logos*) responsible for our universe's existence.⁶³ And, the Gospel of John says the *logos* was at the beginning with God and was God, and that

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Richard Parry, "Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Episteme and Techne" *Plato Stanford.edu*, entry posted June 22, 2014, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/episteme-techne/#2> (accessed May 26, 2019).

⁶³ Ibid.

this *logos* became enfleshed in Jesus of Nazareth and tabernacled for a time among us. Then technology has been with us from the beginning.

Therefore, *technē* which is translated as either craft or art, and *logos* which is the authority for the very presence of the universe, is evidence the elders' role in the Hebrew Bible in terms of ministry has not changed. It is only a different picture in a modern frame. The importance does not wither, only to learn how to master the craft necessary for each older adult to continue the work for any craft, and the presence of the universe is not limited only to one capable group. The translation of elders' role today is not lost. Quite the contrary, it is a matter of older adults learning and embracing the art of using technology. Unfortunately, it took a pandemic for people to see the relevancy of the role of elders as in the Hebrew Bible and the importance of technology for older adult congregants. Technology can assist older adults in maintaining the faith for future generations. Kingdom building is relevant no matter the age.

As previously stated, empowering older adults and considering all aspects of their capabilities, from economic to cognitive abilities is how their essential role can be translated in today's rapidly evolving tech-savvy society by way of Older Adult Technology Ministries in every church across the globe. "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," (1 Tim. 5:17 NRSV). Spreading the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and about His saving Grace is a never-ending task for Christians for spreading the good news until the day of Jesus Christ. The bible says, "And this good news of the kingdom

will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come. (Matt. 24:14 NRSV).

Amos Yong agrees that salvation is ontologically secured through Jesus of Nazareth and epistemically accessed by various providential means of God. It is noted how Yong agrees with John Wesley, e.g., that salvation is "founded upon and made available only in Christ, {and that} it is universally accessible to all, including those adherents of non-Christian religions who do not know the Gospel"⁶⁴ In summary, Amos Yong contends that the Spirit poured out Global theology. Despite the rejection of Jesus of Nazareth, he persevered.

Luke 4:16-21 "When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release of the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:16-21 NRSV).

Yong illustrates in this passage how the coming of Jesus Christ into the world ushered in the acceptable year of the Lord when the oppressed will go free and justice begins to take place. And the book of Acts is critical too. The importance of the book of Acts is for understanding the Apostles' actions and how the resurrected Christ prepared the church for the continuance of the work ahead. Yong noted in connecting the charismatic Pentecostal tradition with the Justice tradition that Christians are the ones

⁶⁴ Bradford McCall, "Notes upon Amos Yong, Beyond the Impasse" *Csperice Word Press*, entry posted June 2, 2016, <https://cspeirce.wordpress.com/2016/06/02/notes-upon-amos-yong-beyond-the-impasse/> (accessed October 25, 2021).

who don't know Christ best. It could be that people in Asia know Christ, even if they don't call him Christ.

It could be that they know him through their traditions because Jesus embodied in the resurrection something more Universal, something greater than just his Galilean/Nazareth History. But in the resurrection, something was embodied in that person, which was greater than just what anyone in that time period could be contained. And that is what Paul keeps working on. That the Christ is a greater principle. Christ in the U.S. is greater than just the person of Jesus in history.⁶⁵ Is not Christ in all who seek Him? We minimize the presence of God in our older adult population. From my observations, today's elders, or older adults are generally no longer viewed as leaders; instead, they are respected as wise but antiquated resources. In the book of Philippians, scripture reads "I am confident in this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:16 NRSV).

However, I believe elders were revered as supreme consultants critical to the church. Badal notes, since the first century A.D., elders in New Testament times served as their congregation's spiritual leaders. They were given the ultimate authority and responsibility to ensure that their church remained on a Biblical course and its mission carried out.⁶⁶ I propose this ministry will provide more straightforward technological methods designed for older adults in all age groups, genders, social and economic categories additional opportunities today for them to continue this role by any digital

⁶⁵ Bradford McCall, "Notes upon Amos Yong, Beyond the Impasse" *Cspeirce Word Press*, entry posted June 2, 2016, <https://cspeirce.wordpress.com/2016/06/02/notes-upon-amos-yong-beyond-the-impasse/> (accessed October 25, 2021).

⁶⁶ Tim Badal, *Village Bible Church*, entry posted September 1, 2001, <https://villagebible.church/articles/ministry-of-elders/#:~:text=Elders%20in%20New%20Testament%20times,its%20mission%20was%20carried%20out> (accessed June 23, 2020).

means necessary. Although, according to the Old Testament, elders were viewed more as leaders, imparting wisdom was part of their role. Wisdom does not pertain to the young but the soundness of the more experienced older adults. Our Christian brothers and sisters of elder or older adult status are relevant no matter one's interpretation of the term elder.

The word elder is of Old Testament Hebrew origin. The primary word for elder, *zagen*, was used, for example, in Numbers 11:16 and Deuteronomy 27:1, of the seventy tribal leaders who assisted Moses. It refers to a particular category of men who were set apart for leadership—much like a senate—in Israel. Deuteronomy 1:9-18 indicates that these men were charged with the responsibility of serving as judges. Moses communicated through them to the people (Exodus 19:7; Deuteronomy 31:9). They led the Passover (Exodus 12:21) and perhaps other elements of worship.⁶⁷

Older adults do not need to profess the amount of wisdom they have to pass the torch. Tradition is not the only main reason to continue the work of God. If wisdom was a person, I believe the question that would be asked is, "Am I no longer relevant?" From my research, one-on-one discussions, and observations, older adults no longer have a distinct position for continuing the faith unless they are amongst the ministerial staff.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: MAKE ROOM FOR OLDER ADULTS

Older adults struggle with reduced reactivity and motor-skills challenges making it difficult to adapt to today's communication advancements. How can an older adult Information Technology ministry and training program enhance older adults' cognitive and physical abilities for ministry and personal uses? This program will generate momentum with one of today's least likely contributors that were once the most valued asset used to continue sacred doctrines. But first, we must view the mindset of the Christian church before COVID-19 struck our livelihood. How many older adults used

⁶⁷ Tim Badal, *Village Bible Church*, entry posted September 1, 2001, <https://villagebible.church/articles/ministry-of-elders/#:~:text=Elders%20in%20New%20Testament%20times,its%20mission%20was%20carried%20out> (accessed June 23, 2020).

digital devices before COVID-19? How many older adults used digital devices during COVID-19? How many are currently using digital devices now?

Before the Pandemic, members and non-members viewed the church from a different perspective. For Example, UBC was known as the Boujie church on the hill. Some said the church only wanted money. They were always passing around the offering plate. There are many disingenuous church members. Church membership was drastically down. Even in the first year of the DMIN program, there were discussions about the decline of membership and how many sought the Internet for answers and joined streaming ministries as viewers. The convenience of it all made walking into the church less attractive.

BRICK AND MORTAR TO CLICK AND ORDER: A PARADIGM SHIFT

The Pandemic affected churches across the globe greatly impacted the youth ministry. But little did people realize; the Older Adult Ministry was also hugely impacted. Suddenly, many churches apprehensive about streaming had no other choice but to gravitate to what was transpiring to sustain; eventually, they had to get on the bandwagon and put virtual programs in place. Some churches suffered financially, and others prospered as their online donations increased so much that even my church that benefited from increased online donations had funds to make much-needed renovations. These monetary donations created another opportunity for economic growth for some churches.

Online ministry is undoubtedly crucial for spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is another opportunity to reach the sick and homebound members of the congregation. Many countries put social distancing mandates and restrictions in place around the world. Technology became the catalyst for ministry and survival when much of the world was

confined by brick and mortar. All of which was contingent on whether a person had Wi-Fi or other digital devices connected to the Internet. Many older adults were unable to stream their church services. The Internet and the worldwide web became another resource to some and a hindrance to others. As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, older adults are faced with another set of limitations on top of the challenges many older adults already face as a disparaged group in most communities. The limits older adults experienced before the COVID-19 Pandemic and the additional difficulties during COVID-19 create an opportunity for older adults to be empowered, tech-savvy, and productive over time.

THE INTERNET: D.O.'S AND DON'TS

In 2019, I referenced my Capstone "*The Spirit and Technology in the 21st Century: The Advancement of Missionary Work*," and how there was no acknowledgment that the development of this World Wide Web is another aspect of the work of God, showing us another avenue by using the Holy Spirit as our guide for ministry work by means of technological advancements.⁶⁸ If the Apostle Paul is right, "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (Phil. 4:8 NRSV).

In 1980, when Sir Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web, and his invention was later followed up by the "Information Management Proposal (that was later rejected),⁶⁹ People took a different look at their limited knowledge and capabilities and

⁶⁸ Jeter, "*The Spirit*."

⁶⁹ Sir Tim Berners-Lee, *History of the Web*, entry posted July 27, 2012, https://webfoundation.org/about/vision/history-of-the-web/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIoJ7OyN7J4QIVF4_ICh3t3QPBEAAYASAAEgKwl_D_BwE (accessed February 25, 2019).

were forced to reinvent themselves. Suddenly, from Universities to the stock market and church, many had to find and use every digital resource they could find to reinvent themselves. Today, many institutions have decided to reframe in-person business dealings and use advanced online platforms to complete business dealings, for example, registering students online only for college. However, the church expressed the need to find additional resources but did little to include older adults in this process.

Sensing notes that respect for the community and the responsibility to keep the community's interest affects the project. More specifically, to protect the community from harm.⁷⁰It immediately summoned me to reflect on the dangers of cyberbullying and the importance of educating older adults on the need for cybersecurity when surfing the World Wide Web and other applications and systems as technology continues to evolve rapidly. It includes informing older adults in ministry and secular communities of the dangers of the World Wide Web.

THE NECESSITY: BEGINNING WITH THE BASICS

This program is not just about including older adults, although many churches face challenges to include older adults. From the least to the most, many older adults had to find or wonder how to stay connected. Most importantly, how many of these older adults are continuing ministry work? I believe the elements needed to make this ministry a success begin with the basics. These basics are contingent upon participation. The goal is to build a foundation to support this ministry and for this ministry to be a means of support for other churches. Although most members are resistant to adapting to change,

⁷⁰ Sensing, *Qualitative*, 33.

there is a hunger and an increased desire for older adults and others to become self-sufficient and knowledgeable about today's technology.

Since technology is also an enabler and people are no longer required to be in the same room to hear the Gospel, attend Bible Study and fellowship, this ministry will equip members with the ability to be unwavering and remain Kingdom-minded in our quest for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.⁷¹ No ministry is always critical, especially if the goal remains the same: to be faithful to the cause and true to the mission. The Apostle Paul states, “Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” (1 Cor. 15:58 NRSV).

THE WHAT IF'S: TRUST THE PROCESS

The hand of the only one and only true living God is always at work. I have generated my list of the "What If's of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- What if COVID-19 Pandemic paved the way for this new-aged paradigm shift as God's way of showing us what we lack and need to continue to work?
- What if the circumstances with older adults and technology are also God's way of showing us that we must go back to much of our original ways of spreading the Gospel and maintaining the faith as technology is unstable? We should value the importance of memorizing scripture and tradition, both of which should be a relentless desideratum.
- What if older adults seemingly being left behind in this technological age is God's way of telling us that our memory, the intentionality of placing the Word of God

⁷¹ Jeter, *The Spirit*.”

in our hearts. Technology is not dependable. Still, our minds, no matter the age, are teachable and trainable and can be enhanced with the intentionality of memorizing the Roman Road so that we can be ready at any moment to minister.

- What if, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, social distancing has reminded us we must win the lost to Christ by any means necessary?
- What if this Pandemic has taught us that we must conduct ministries with a backup plan and emergency digital means, an emergency plan-of-action? Ministry never ends. Ministry must always continue.
- What if this is God's way of allowing us to reinvent ourselves to be better prepared for the unknown in today's world? We don't know when the day of Jesus Christ is going to come.
- What if this is God's way of letting us know that technology is not an enemy of the church but another resource the church needs to continue reaching the world, to win the loss to Christ.
- What if God is saying our children need to be better prepared to assist our older adults?
- What if our children's role is not conducive to only working with themselves, but with older adults so that our older adults can continue the work by adapting to today's communication advances? "Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things." (Gen. 24:1 NRSV).
- What if the world has finally realized the possibility of creating a technology ministry for older adults without being face-to-face?

- What is the long-term impact of an Older Adult Information Technology ministry? Are there any methodological issues inherent in the Assessment of Technology use for older adults?

It is no surprise that many Christians failed to see the big picture, as COVID-19 reminded many of the importance of trusting God and His divine plan. As previously noted, Pirke Avot's collection of principles associated with the Rabbinic Jewish shows us a systematic approach to learning, being intentional, persevering, and exercising the importance of maintaining our faith practices at all costs. I believe the answers to each "What If" question proposes that all workflows, platforms, digital devices, and any form of technology should be designed to accommodate older adults as COVID-19 presented to the forefront to assist our forgotten yet critical group of older adult leaders and educators from all walks of life.

As with any situation, new challenges often foster new opportunities. Research shows why this program is a vital component for our older adult ministries and older adult communities. COVID-19 oppositions many older adult congregants face in their homes are how simple tasks can easily become monumental for older adults seeking to be served or serve in ministry, but generally unintentionally left behind as a disparaged and forgotten group in the Christian and secular communities.

ONE-ON-ONE'S: A CLOSER VIEW OF THE CHALLENGES

Today, COVID-19 Pandemic recreated an implementation strategy that has become critical in mobilizing personal data collection from one-on-ones with continuous revelations amid this COVID-19 Pandemic. Thus, fieldwork and field research have become primary forms of data collection methods. Today, our society is experiencing a tremendous experience, and creating new data and new knowledge is inevitable. The

interpersonal experience with this field work-study, the frustrations of limited abilities, limited access to people, and the essence of the unknown looming imposed a daunting change to an already challenging daily routine. The results indicated in the case of five (5) regularly communicated Christians. From young-old (65-74 years old), middle-old (75-84 years old) to (85 years old +).

As previously noted, patience is the common denominator when working with older adults' congregants from essential to advanced digital applications. I gathered qualitative data of informal fieldwork experiences because of COVID-19. The experience included the expected to the least expected findings. Upon which I have come to realize older adults experienced unnecessary complications during COVID-19. I found an under layer that further warranted the need to explore the disassociation family members have with older adults in their families.

More specifically, the involvements of Older Adult Congregants in a church setting or virtually to reveal underlying truths and interactions Older Adults have within their own families. Through this epistemological data obtained during an epidemic we can further study the complexities of family relationships of Old Adults during a tech-savvy society. According to Academic, findings indicate the unique understandings that each method contributes, the strengths and limitations of integrating location with qualitative data, and the potential for this methodology to generate knowledge about person-place transactions that can inform practice, policy, and research to promote older adults' well-being.⁷²

⁷² W.D. Bartlo, “*Relationships with places: An ethnographic study of older adults in Detroit neighborhoods*” entry posted June 30, 2017, https://academic.oup.com/innovateage/article/1/suppl_1/516/3898726 (accessed October 30, 2021).

The quantitative and qualitative reflections survey will clarify various real-time challenges and experiences older adults face during COVID-19—an example of the draft questionnaire provided. (See Appendix E).

The number of times family members assisted their older adult loved ones with any digital or technical means is few. Bartlo explains A theoretical approach that utilizes anthropological considerations of kinship is vital to framing research on social isolation as relationships are at the core of understanding the affiliations of connections of individuals.⁷³

Connections are critical, yet lack of connections becomes an inanimate threat to older adults with fewer family members or no children to care for them. Wingfield also illustrated how within many cultures, the duty for adult children to care for aging parents — regardless of where the parents live — is a backbone of the social safety net. Older adults who are childless often find community and care from church communities. That is likely to be a growth opportunity for churches of all kinds.⁷⁴

Interestingly, my fieldwork consisted of five (5) participants, yet the closeness exposed sad truths within the dynamics of most of these participants. I can obtain an accurate account of genuine needs and challenges Older Adults encountered during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This qualitative-participatory methodology allows for a level of connectedness for fieldwork during a pandemic that would otherwise be unfounded. I also feel this information would help family members of Older Adults learn the value of

⁷³ W.D. Bartlo, “*Relationships with places: An ethnographic study of older adults in Detroit neighborhoods*” entry posted June 30, 2017, https://academic.oup.com/innovateage/article/1/suppl_1/516/3898726 (accessed October 30, 2021).

⁷⁴ Mark Wingfield, “As the American population grows older, church ministries need to shift” *Baptist News Global*, entry posted October 18, 2010, https://baptistnews.com/article/as-the-american-population-grows-older-church-ministries-need-to-shift/#.YX8grOhKj_d. (accessed October 30, 2021).

patience when their Older Adult family members begin to thrive as their independence increases, and loneliness is less prevalent.

It is vital to this process to obtain an account of the family dynamics, mainly the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of whom may be available to assist case participants. I conducted a tally of these family members for each participant. (See Appendix F.)

I would be remiss if I did not disclose why an Older Adult Technology Ministry from Mega-Churches to Storefront Churches is necessary. If a church is preparing to launch an online service or program, how many older adults' congregants would find participating a breeze?

When I thought of the threat of COVID-19 spreading worse than the flu in the fall and winter season and the discussion of the Internet as part of everyday life being redundant, I never thought that the Internet would ever actually become more than an integrated part of everyday life. However, now it is a multifaceted tool that helps keep people active for various reasons. As a doctoral student and practitioner-researcher, the Internet can carry a higher percentage of the research process.

Today the Internet is one of the most crucial systems needed for maintaining and completing this Older Adult Information Technology Program. In Chapter 9 of *Action Research*, Stringer illustrates how the Internet provides the opportunity to gain access quickly and inexpensively to information and disseminate research findings - these samples of tools and resources are subject to change over time as URLs move and the

Internet continues to evolve.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the Internet has become an essential part of the process relative to the outcome.

Social provides an opportunity to gain followers, build my brand, communicate, and share pertinent information relevant to this ministry. However, today, other collaborative software companies are growing, producing new and more efficient applications. These web combined software companies are creating accessible ways for people to use online collaboration for virtual groups. Many companies are developing user-friendly tools that can help me produce tasks efficiently by automating information and lessons I will need to manage or give my team to assist me with managing. Action Research and the Internet have become an undeniably intertwined process required for this program's best outcome for success.

UNWAVERING: AN ONGOING COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

I find that Kathryn Herr, and Gary L. Anderson's book, *The Action Research Dissertation*, pinpoints that Action Researchers, like all researchers, are interested in whether knowledge generated from the research is valid or trustworthy.⁷⁶ Today, this claim is valid in every sense. At first, I wondered, how can we continue gathering research data relevant for today as we navigate this global Pandemic?

My quest for information is practical and formal due to COVID-19. It is the nature and reality of the world we live in today. The theory of knowledge lies more with the transparency of living through this unprecedented time. This formal practical knowledge debate is about more than research epistemology and methodology; it is about

⁷⁵ Stinger, *Action Research*, 230.

⁷⁶ Herr and Anderson, *The Action*, 61.

the very nature of the professional practice itself and what types of knowledge can best inform it.⁷⁷ This epistemology research allowed me to understand older adult case studies' thinking processes in their current situation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic created a core area of philosophical analysis with real-world, hands-on experience conducted via telephone and periodic safe space in-house visitations.

My role during this process soon took on a different meaning, a new way of thinking, and as an Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. New York Theological Cohort, the zeal for imminent change on so many different levels. I cannot foster ahead without collaborative efforts. It takes a community for change to be effective. I am on both ends of the spectrum as a PAR. Participatory Action Research partly solves such a dualistic approach to the insider-outsider conundrum, who suggest that it brings insider and outsider perspectives into the research when research is collaborative.⁷⁸ I believe Herr and Anderson allude to how a researcher's dual approach can address complex problems and solutions and what to do when qualitative researchers are not in total agreement? Do they generally reject positivism claims that the best research is fundamentally about pursuing truth value (internal validity) by demonstrating that causes and effects have been isolated?⁷⁹ The pursuit of truth is genuine as it pertains to my situation, and this program, and as I live my ethics in the process. It empowers practitioners and communities who create knowledge, how it is created, and who uses it.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Ibid, 62.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 65.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 65.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 80.

CHAPTER 5 MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES

SITE TEAM ASSESSMENTS:

Listed below is a summary of the Site Team assessment of Ministerial Competencies derived from meetings to help me produce a well-developed dissertation titled *"Amalgamated Consumer Information: Understanding the Technological Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Older Adult Congregants."*

As Spiritual Leader – Minister Jeter is attentive to the journeys of others. She has an innate ability to be a useful spiritual guide and leader. Minister Jeter expresses the need to develop her skills and knowledge of spiritual development.

As Professional – Minister Jenice listens well and is open and personable. She has a positive attitude and is too enthusiastic about being productive, focused, proficient, and guided. The candidate will be intentional about focusing more attention on time management.

Technology Enthusiast – Minister Jeter understands the importance technology has on ministry. She will continue to utilize best practices using mediums relevant to ministry to spread the Gospel of Christ. The candidate will seek to stay abreast of technological advancements and their impact on ministry.

MY SELF EVALUATION OF THE MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES

The three ministerial competencies chosen by the remaining members of my Site Team are A Spiritual Leader, A Professional, and Technology Enthusiast. Comparatively speaking, from my perspective, as a spiritual leader, professional, or a technology enthusiast mentoring is most effective in our ministries when we experienced leaders and even prophets remember the purpose, the plan, and the origin of the cause.

If Jesus Christ is not always the driving force, the effect of mentoring in our ministry gets tainted. We are ineffective if we fail to acknowledge the need for mentors. We do not know everything. For it is my wish to pursue not only the hand of God but also to seek His face. The uncertainty of our nation is on the hearts and minds of both Americans and Christians. My co-worker recently expressed his concerns about feeling hopeless, not knowing how long COVID-19 will last. Walter Brueggemann's book *Three Urgent Prophetic Tasks*: notes that the book of Lamentations voices the tragic loss of those who remained in the city. They were subject, every day, to the sights and smells of a city in shambles.⁸¹ What appears to be insightful or foul in a visual sense upon us is derived from lack of faith in God. A professional leader must be on one accord knowing that seeking guidance does not minimize the authenticity of their prophetic abilities.

I have matured over the years as I have become accustomed to many moments of reflection of sorrow because of the loss of two sisters in the ministry. Nevertheless, as I began as a Minister in Training (MIT), I appreciate the guidance I obtained from my mentors. Maturity is the total reliance on God to place anyone, including the most unlikely people He deems necessary, to become my mentor. This encompasses

⁸¹ Walter Brueggemann, *Three Urgent Prophetic Tasks: Reality, Grief, and Hope* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 106.

whomever God steers my way for guidance. Thompson and Murchison note that mentoring in this context is rooted in life together that is characterized by asking, shaped by dependence upon another, finding its way forward by being drawn into a life, not of its own making.⁸² The bible states the following:

²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵ The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall.” (Matt. 7:24-27 NRSV).

Others can mentor us professionals who are open to obtaining insight from others as the revelations of God are revealed continuously to whomever He chooses. We should always aspire to be critical thinkers and follow our own “critical thinker” who follows only their notions of God-given reasoning. For God is the master of strategy, and He alone should always be our guide.

Seminary training and further educational endeavors are crucial. To be effective, we must rid ourselves of old perceptions, stereotypical thought processes, etc. Seeking guidance is always relevant.

I, too, can become a mentor in theology and pastoral ministry, for I am willing to continue the church’s work. No one cannot be effective alone in the kingdom of God here on earth.

Guidance is vital at the beginning of the journey of anyone’s ministry. We live in a time when watching the news and observing the rhetoric, talks, and cogitation are blatant inconsistencies from the White House officials to local political officials, etc. This

⁸² Dean K Thompson and Cameron D. Murchison, ed, *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans, 2018), 40.

new journey must be more incredible than I imagined for me. The teachings of a mentor are more than a necessity today, for we have become accustomed to other types of pensiveness on the White House and the insecurity that plagues us all (to some degree).

As Brueggemann exclaims, Jeremiah's story is the sheer courage of the man. Jeremiah was not only courageous, but he was also unyielding and daring. Brueggemann also states that amid near despair, the prophetic task is to articulate hope, the prospect of fresh historical possibility assured by God's good governance of the future.⁸³

There is no room for personal objectives. The dangers of the "work of the flesh" apply today to church professional leaders and prophets. Evidence of the impact of the "work of the flesh" is seen in the White House. Brueggemann indicates the outcomes of the narrative by referencing Paul's accounts of the "works of the flesh," which, in this context, may be understood not as "natural" modes of conduct. Still, instead, methods are assumed and legitimated patterns of behavior amid the imperial narrative.⁸⁴ If I am going to be effective in my own ministry, then I must seek leadership from unselfish and God-fearing mentors. Any work of the flesh is never of God. Any personal agenda of any man or woman of the cloth is never of God. For the bible tells us that, "He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Cor. 1:30-31 NRSV).

They are implying that it does not matter who you are, how well you preach, how many followers you have, or how effective you appear to others. What is essential is that no matter the level of effectiveness or ineffectiveness we embody, the sovereign God will

⁸³ Brueggemann, *Three Urgent*, 119.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 140.

indeed reign. The bible says, *“Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever.”* (Rev. 11:15 NRSV).

To conclude, as representations of the body of Christ, acquiring proper mentorship should be utilized as additional toolsets for winning the loss to Christ. The disenfranchised and the disconnected seek the church for guidance or the internet. Either way, the effectiveness of mentorship in my ministry can aid me with aligning with the Will of God by keeping me focused, unwavering and efficient.

(See Appendix G for Site Team Assignments and Appendix H for “Thank You” letter example submitted to my Site Team members).

MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES CHOSEN FOR DEVELOPMENT:

SPIRITUAL LEADER:

To develop my spiritual identity so that its impact enlarges my territory and is spiritually transformative as a tech-savvy community leader that promotes relevant change as it pertains to but not inclusively, to older adults in the church and community as the opportunity presents itself.

Strategies:

- I will study pertinent literature on the Holy Spirit's work and incorporate it into written prose. (See Appendix I.) The literary prose on the work of the Holy Spirit is in its second round of edits.
- Transcribed recording of the sermon “By Any Means Necessary” on technological means for ministry work. (See Appendix J.)
 - As a Spiritual Leader, I believe reminding the church of unity is critical for kingdom-minded work. Unity includes being resourceful no matter the outlet and the age or scholarly aptitude. Jesus prayed, *“That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”* (John 1:21-23 NRSV).

Evaluation:

- I will obtain 80% of feedback in a written evaluation illustrating cohesiveness and clarity of the Holy Spirit's work and technology in the 21st Century upon completing my written prose through focus groups and surveys.
- I created a document with relevant information obtained about technology's importance, safety measures and incorporate the information in my Amalgamated Consumer Information section as additional information for consumers and website resources. (See Appendix K.)

PROFESSIONAL:

To engage in administrative activities based on an Older Adult Information Technology Ministry's needs and provide necessary processes, schedules, and information to distribute and administer as needed. All levels of professional leadership include the use of administrative, mentors, and prophetic abilities.

Strategies:

- Identify the age and capabilities for technology training levels of older adults into 3 or 5 categories.
- I will generate a System of Operation (SOP) process for each application or program to train seniors.
- I attended a professional development course on utilizing emotional intelligence skillsets. I obtained a certificate upon completion in September 2021 – “Moving Ahead: Breaking Behavior Patterns That Hold You Back” by American Management Association. (See Appendix L.)

- Purpose of Professional Development Course: Professional leadership in the public and private sectors consists of utilizing skillsets when encountering situations, managing stress, and using strategies for best outcomes.

In summary, the emotional intelligence course helped me learn how to reprogram my internal computer (my brain/emotions).

- Self-awareness
 - Use self-awareness
- Self-regulation
 - Managing my emotions
 - Feel and express improvements
- Self-motivation
 - By using rational thought
- Social awareness
 - Empathy
- Social skills
 - Manage my relationships
 - Effective relationships

If I put skillsets learned to use, my professional skills will improve with practice.

Self-awareness goes a long way by acknowledging my negative thoughts. Making efforts to change them positively and how I see myself are characteristics of imaging and seeing the big picture in most situations.

What is emotional intelligence? It is a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and action.⁸⁵

Evaluation:

- I requested an evaluation from the Site Team members. This evaluation will illustrate that the bulk of the participants will conclude that the program reflects their abilities to operate selected digital devices with increased confidence.
- 90% of older adult participants will complete an evaluation form at the end of the program.

TECHNOLOGICAL ENTHUSIAST:

Stay abreast of technological advancements and its impact on ministry. Note resources listing in Appendices.

Strategies:

- I will research top Information Technology companies committed to evolving technological platforms in digital communications and note resources in the Appendix section.
- I will develop a mobile app prototype designed to assist older adults and their families track resources and services for their loved ones.
 - Designed for iPhone or Android to address the minimal technological adjustments to include older adults in this digital era
 - Designed to increase understanding of the problem

⁸⁵ John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey, *Emotional Intelligence* (Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing, 1990), 3.

- Designed to validate the importance of the mobile app.

Evaluation:

- I will survey the participants showing the effectiveness of the Older Adult Information Technology Program.
- 75% will complete the survey.

NECESSITY: MOBILE APP PROTOTYPE

This Mobile App prototype is called “NECESSITY.”

- NECESSITY

“Connecting task with resources for older adults.”

- ABOUT NECESSITY

NECESSITY provides consumers with a user-friendly personalized platform families can use to expeditiously track and facilitate assisted-living services for older adult loved ones based on their individualized needs in real-time. Consumers-older adults and their caretakers can personalize *NECESSITY* features for personal, church, and local community services. NECESSITY is easy for both the older adult clients and their guardian.

- NECESSITY – IS A “JETER 9” BRAND

Another one of Jenice Jeter’s passions is advocating to empower older adults to use new-age technological means for ministry and personal usage.

- THE PROBLEM

Family members are often too busy to assist their older adult loved ones with daily chores and other basic essential needs for home, church, and local community services.

- WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Maintaining independence is important for people as they age. In fact, losing it is one of the biggest fear’s older adults have. An overwhelming majority want to remain in their homes-and understandably so.⁸⁶ Many older adults require

⁸⁶ ASHA, “A Senior Living Resource” *Where you live matters*, entry posted August 11, 2021, <https://www.wheretheyoulivematters.org/assisted-living-defined/> (accessed November 29, 2021).

a range of assisted-living services and including health and wellness, transportation, and today, learning technological basics for navigating digital devices and accessing online services are increasingly on the rise.

Over the past 10 years, the population age 65 and over increased from 37.2 million in 2006 to 49.2 million in 2016 (a 33% increase) and is projected to almost double to 98 million in 2060.⁸⁷

- 2017 THE NEED FOR CAREGIVING INCREASES WITH AGE⁸⁸

3 % for adults ages 65-74

9 % for adults ages 75-84

22 % for adults ages 85 and up

- 2020 FREQUENCY OF CAREGIVER VISITS⁸⁹

55 % visits more than once a week

18 % visits once a week

13 % visits once a month

9 % visits less than once a month

- SOLUTION

- A Mobile Application NECESSITY to track assisted-living services for older adults loved ones in real-time.

MOBILE APP PROTOTYPE CONCLUSION:

⁸⁷ Administration for Aging, “A Profile of Older Americans: 2017,” <https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/Aging%20and%20Disability%20in%20America/2017OlderAmericansProfile.pdf> (accessed November 30, 2021).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ AARP, “Caregiving in the U.S.” 2020 Report AARP Family Caregiving, entry posted May 2020, <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2020/05/full-report-caregiving-in-the-united-states.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00103.001.pdf> (accessed November 30, 2021).

This Mobile APP will continue to evolve as technology changes and accommodations are tweaked accordingly. Technology use has become the most critical approach to maintaining social connectedness during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹⁰ Customers can use the Mobile APP for personal, church, and local community usages.

Additional goals for the Mobile App Prototype “Necessity.”

- Validate its relevancy
- Obtain feedback
- Make pertinent changes to improve its effectiveness
- Select the best encryption technology for security safety

⁹⁰ Jing Wang, “Older Adults’ Experiences with Using Technology for Socialization During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Cross-sectional Survey Study” *National Center for Biotechnology Information*, entry posted April 23, 2021, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8074950/> (accessed November 29, 2021).

PROTOTYPE: NECESSITY - SCREEN'S ONE, TWO, AND THREE

This mobile app offers simple, user-friendly touch screen options. (See Appendix M.)

Other functions and potential navigational screens on the prototype NECESSITY:

- Client, family member, can use as a checklist before Aid/Employee completes their task/job functions the day.
- Outstanding services are managed accordingly – by customers using “user-friendly” navigation directives.
- Customers will have an option to customer new screens to fit client needs.
- NECESSITY will become a part of the list of combined resources in this project with easy tracking prompts that can booster the digital device experience of older adults.

THE MARKET

Mobile App for Older Adults:

- \$935B: Mobile App Revenue: By 2023, worldwide mobile app revenues will grow from 581.9B to \$935B⁹¹
- 48 percent of the respondents said that they did not think frequent tracking prompts would have a negative effect on their user experience.⁹²

FORGING AHEAD: REAL-TIME ACTIVE-ENGAGEMENT

⁹¹ L. Ceci, “Worldwide mobile app revenues in 2014-2023 (in billion U.S. dollars)” *Statista*, entry posted July 7, 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/269025/worldwide-mobile-app-revenue-forecast/> (accessed December 8, 2021).

⁹² Joseph Johnson, “Do you think that frequent tracking prompts would negatively impact your user experience?” *Statista*, entry posted October 19, 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1226391/impact-of-tracking-prompts-on-ios-user-experience-us/> (accessed December 8, 2021).

Necessity is a Mobile App useful for families to maintain real-time data on resources and other logistics to manage older adults' needs. On December 7, 2021, Amazon introduced the "Alexa Together" eldercare subscription for families. Alexa Together expands to the Care Hub feature set to combine access to an emergency helpline, fall detection response feature, a remote assist option that allows family members to manage settings on the older person's device, and an activity feed for family members that notifies them when their loved one is active-engaging with Alexa or other smart home devices, or notified when there's been a lag in that unusual activity.⁹³

⁹³ Sarah Perez, "Amazon launches its \$19.99 per month 'Alexa Together' elder care subscription for families" *Tech Crunch*, entry posted December 7, 2021, <https://techcrunch.com/2021/12/07/amazon-launches-its-19-99-per-month-alexa-together-elder-care-subscription-for-families/> (accessed December 8, 2021).

CHAPTER 6 EVALUATION

PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION: THE NEW-NORMAL

I had to develop a virtual collaborative evaluation strategy due to the COVID-19 pandemic with this project. At the height of the initial shutdown in the Tri-State area, social distancing mandates and the fear of airborne transmission made it unsafe and impossible to conduct in-person evaluations. This action research project forced me to produce a program different from its original goal. Kerr and Anderson expressed the field of evaluation has long supported strategies that blend in many ways with PAR (participatory approach research)⁹⁴

There was minimal blending and more bending for this program to find workarounds and other alternatives. Only to learn, just when I thought we were reverting to some sense of normalcy, different variants emerged. The number of infected people increased. When the number of people who contracted the virus, hospitalizations, and deaths rose, uncertainty stepped back on the home plate. The rise in new cases felt like a climatic seesaw in the sky with a mind of its own.

Method of Evaluation:

After each participant completed the program, my original goal was to create a focus group. Part of the evaluation strategy for the focus group was to split the groups up

⁹⁴ Herr and Anderson, *The Action*, 19.

by the level of skillsets upon completing the program.

Instead, I had to rely on questionnaires, as shown in chapter 3, under "Case Study Participants Questions: List of Challenges and as shown in Appendix E Case Study Participant Questionnaires.

Strategy 1: Two of my Site Team members' suggested that the evaluation strategy include calling each program participant and obtaining information based on how much they learned or have not learned.

Strategy 2:

Another Site Team member suggested that I should be mindful that I talk fast and need to slow down when needed as previously stated.

Strategy 3:

I transcribed two sermons, one "By Any Means Necessary," which also focused on using any device, landline, cell phone, tablet, or computer to minister to others. The other sermon, "Be Strong and Work," primarily focused on rebuilding, renewing, and being strong and work.

Evaluation Results:

Two significant parts of the evaluation uncovered a critical aspect.

- All five participants relied on and hoped their loved ones had the time or had more time to assist them with technology basics.
- All five participants felt family and people lacked enough patience to assist them with any device.

Future Evaluation

Strategy 1:

My prayer is that when adapting to our new routine, would I be able to revise the program and include the following during future evaluations utilizing whichever methodology would work at that time:

Strategy 2:

Ask a series of pertinent questions. Example questions below:

- Was the project successful?
- What are some of the things I learned?
- What competencies have I improved?
- How do I think the project is going to continue from this point?

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

OLDER ADULTS ARE LIVING LONGER: NEW CATEGORIES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

After my demonstration project was approved, my first discussion met with a suggestion to reframe from using the word seniors and reference them as older adults. The term elder in the bible is also used to reference older adults. As my project began to unfold, I continued my research and noticed other researchers referring to seniors as older adults as today's politically correct term to use. In addition, today, older adults are going back to work, working past the age of 65, reinventing themselves, and living longer. At Union Baptist Church of Stamford, we recently had four-five members over 100 years old within a year. Although my focus is a ministry-based action-based reflection, my research and fieldwork/field study lead me to consider an additional alternative to referring to someone as an elder or a senior citizen or simply old. The name "older adult" warrants change as per my conversation with many Old Adults many do not feel their age. I created a new category to define older adults 65 years old and older. (See Appendix N.)

I fully embrace the interpretation of Knowledge Interests of Action Research. As Herr and Anderson state, the three distinct "interests" of the researcher in the pursuit of knowledge generation: technical, practical, and emancipatory.⁹⁵ These three distinct

⁹⁵ Herr and Anderson, *The Action*, 35.

interests are Technical Interest which refers to the natural and social realm, Practical Interest employs the interpretive methodologies, and Emancipatory Interest is the release of human potential. All three interpretations lead me to the importance of questioning the validity of any research finding. These findings are crucial to the accuracy of my dissertation and the relevance of my action research project.

As a result, although my socio-philosophical ideology of this Action Research Dissertation is uniquely driven, it incorporates methodologies throughout the process generated from my collective and conceptual fieldwork experience during these unprecedented times. I never before thought that technical and practicality would co-exist. However, the two have become necessary for comprehending, explaining, and expressing real-life circumstances COVID-19 presents in this new age of technology.

A PLACE WE'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE – NEVER DONE BEFORE

During the spring 2019 semester at New York Theological Seminaries Master's Degree program, I had the pleasure of meeting a senior who joined our spring 2019 class "Spirit in the World." Professor Irvin was experiencing technical issues due to the location of our small class setting, and the seminary's Wi-Fi challenges added to these technical problems. When I prepared to put down my notebook to assist Professor Irvin, the senior guest student jumped to Professor Irvin's aid and quickly identified the issue without assistance from me or any other student. That was my first experience with seeing the capabilities of a senior demonstrating their quick-thinking abilities when it came to navigating and operating digital devices.

The woman did not hesitate. I felt slow. And there is nothing contentious about her delivery. She was happy to assist the Professor. But I loved it! It was an excellent example of the scalability of this program. The senior got right to the point. I, on the

other hand, was thinking of a “process.” However, that situation taught me something – scalability.

Not only was I impressed by this occurrence. I desired to prove older adults are far capable of handling technology than many may believe. That experience jumpstarted my quest to advocate for a Senior Technology Program, now referred to as an Older Adult Technology Program for the following reasons:

- Some seniors only need the data analysis or workflow steps or both.
- Other seniors need an entirely different approach.

I believe this process and my personal experience have taught me that there is a need to reexamine the definition of “Old Age.” As a result of my research, I have created another spin to identifying older adults as “TIERS” representative of the beauty of aging!

MORE TO CONCLUDE

- What have I learned? The church must be strong and continue to work regardless of unforeseen challenges. Each opposition must be met with a strategic plan to meet the needs of older adults irrespective of the ministry or program.
- Next steps: Advice ministries and programs to continuously create revised Systems of Operation (SOP’s) for older adults on digital devices, navigating the internet and ministry programs on an as-needed basis.
- Plan of action: Ongoing as new COVID-19 variants are emerging.
 - We need a backup plan. “A rainy-day task force for older adults with immobility challenges, but normal operations must continue.”
- We must be strong and work! Reverend Carleton J. Giles preached a powerful sermon titled: “Be Strong and Work.” (See Appendix O.)

HONORING ACP, JR.: AN UNAPOLOGETIC COMMITMENT

My research supports my supposition to commit to fighting for the disparaged group of older adults. As ministry leaders, we must always stand for the least of them in our communities and abroad. We must continue this fight in the Spirit of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. By demonstrating morals and principles in every step of this process. All moving parts of this process are vital, and they should always be purpose-driven.

It is an honor to be an Adam Clayton Power, Jr Fellow at New York Theological Seminary and partake in the inaugural ACP, Jr. Fellows celebratory events and become a co-Author of “Protest, Pandemic, Politics: Essays on Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.” And a webinar panelist to celebrate ACP, Jr. an unapologetic community activist and leaders. A synopsis of the anthology provided. (See Appendix P.)

EMPOWER TO SERVE:

All able Christians are a part of the body of Christ. Our responsibility to represent God in the world is not for a selected few Christians. The elders' role in the Hebrew Bible and today has not changed. Pastor Perry would often say, "It's an old picture in a modern frame." In my view, it is evident to many Christians today that it took a pandemic for people to see the relevance of the role older adults and the relevance technology plays in many aspects of ministering today.

One of the things this program taught me is that we must reframe from minimizing the work of God amongst the older adult congregation and its community. The bible says, "Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." (1 Cor. 15:58 NRSV).

Families must make more effort to assist their older adult loved ones. The Mobile App Prototype NECESSITY or alike can bridge that gap in real-time.

NECESSITY: AN UNLIKELY ASSISTANT:

Many older adults feared using technology and the internet due to a lack of confidence in their abilities and fear of internet scammers. My hope is that the mobile app prototype NECESSITY which I designed mainly for older adults will be of some help. Because the goal of NECESSITY is to provide a user-friendly digital device to enhance their ministries and connect with family and community in real-time.

Mother Sumpter will reach 100 years of age by the Grace of God on August 22, 2022. Yet, her uncanny ability to absorb information is astounding. As a result, I suggested Mother Sumpter join me as one of my Older Adult Information Technology Assistants, and she happily accepted. Her reactions to the character's pictures of the brain and cell phone allowed her to put down her guards and entertain the idea of learning the basics to operate digital devices and assist me in this process. It may sound outlandish; however, Mother Sumpter takes her role as my assistant seriously. She encouraged other older adults to embrace technology and fore ahead with confidence in their ability to learn digital basics skillsets for starters.

CONTINUING THE WORK: A NECESSITY FOR THE FUTURE:

There is an exuberant amount of research needed to fully understand the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on older adult congregants. The goal is to continue the investigation and obtain relevant data to empower older adult congregants and their ministries in this tech-savvy digital era. Data will be used for further research and to discover the best solution(s) to the problem.

- The list is as follows:
 - Send the questionnaire to Christian, Jewish, Islamic, and other organizations to obtain data on the technological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their older adult congregants/members.
 - Continue working on the best security for the Mobile App by determining the best technology to use to encrypt user information.
 - As the new era of the platform is building Mobile Apps, develop additional studies on Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) to see their beneficial impact on older adults.
 - Define and decide on the precise potential target market age range, gender(s) for my next steps.
 - Determine the criteria and outcome I am looking to obtain.
 - How can I best use integral transformation so my idea is mapped and the challenge easier to analyze and address?
 - Research if my idea can prove to help with declining motor skills.
 - Study how the Mobile App can enhance the livelihood of older adults
 - How to take an older adult fellowship and church experience today from traditional brick and mortar and convert it into a digital experience via the Mobile App NECESSITY?
 - Will it provide the ability for older adults to zoom in?
 - Will it provide the ability for the app to read to them?
 - Will it provide the ability for the app to speak back to them?
 - How can older adults become comfortable with my Mobile App?

- What is the best outcome for a marketing strategy plan of action?
 - Product
 - Price
 - Place
 - Promotion
- Which methodologies to use?
- Which method is best to support this particular APP?
- How would NECESSITY be different from any other religious APP?

FINAL CONCLUSION:

For my Older Adult Information Technology Ministry/Program, the COVID-19 Pandemic generated challenges and blessings for churches and communities. Although initially, it appeared that the challenges outweighed the benefits. My prayer is that the result revitalizes every Christian older adult, bronze, gold, silver, and platinum age 65 years and older, with the will, tenacity, and sagacity to work as Warriors of the Most-High God. And as Warriors of God, we are intentional about living, learning, and applying every aspect of ministry, spreading the Gospel near and far by way of technology, no matter physical limitations.

A prayerful life will always allow all participants to commune with God regularly. As participants learn, and as we teach older adults' participants through love we are transformed in the process, growing closer to God and in the image of Christ as we persevere by any means necessary, relying on the Holy Spirit's to guide us individually and collectively.

I give Glory and honor to God for the opportunity to produce and present this Older Adult Technology Ministry. For God is the very source of every good and perfect

thing we see and do not see. For it is His abundance of Grace that sustains us all, young, and old. It is by His love we are redeemed. And He alone deserves all the Glory, honor, and praise for anyone blessed in any way by this ministry. I pray that the love of God and *patience* with each other will guide the church in leaps and bounds as the church and the world evolves.

FROM THE SILENCE OF PREACHERS TO “*I MAY HAVE HAD TO...*”

After learning my catechizer passed away in early 2020 during the height of the pandemic. We were waiting for my pastor to provide a date for my ordination. Nonetheless, I was determined to find a way to motivate our cohort amid this calamity and even as I was grieving. The COVID-19 pandemic experience provided one of the most heart-wrenching observations I have ever encountered in the ministry. I refer to it as “The COVID-19 Effect on Preachers.” We gathered for the first time since the pandemic during one of our initial “check-in” meetings with the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Cohort 2 group.

I put my best face on and said to the group, “Hi All, I am so glad we are gathering today!” We learned during that moment that two of our colleagues were diagnosed with COVID-19. They both expressed their battles with the virus and the complications that lingered as a result. The information was hard to receive. I expected my jolly personality to overshadow the overcast gloom so intense as if despair swooped down and took over the meeting.

Suddenly, there was an awkward silence on a zoom meeting with all preachers. Many of which had years of preaching experience. The silence was as if the preachers had nothing to say and weren’t sure what to say or how to articulate their feelings. As one of the newest members of the ministry, I never thought I would hear “The Silence of

Preachers.” I waited for someone to speak again. Then finally, one Powell Fellow said, “I got nothing!”

During that moment, I regained strength, the will, and the tenacity to keep going. I smiled and said, we got this, we can do this! We continued to meet weekly, encouraging each other. COVID-19 was not going to prevent me from forging ahead. Although I had to modify my program, I assisted the older adults with whom I drew strength to persevere.

- I may have had to struggle not to call it quits during the pandemic.
- I may have had to pause after losing loved ones due to the pandemic.
- I may have had to run back and forth to the doctor with my sons after seeing two of my millennial children battle anxiety and depression due to the pandemic.
- I may have had to support my friend (ex-husband) after his battle with sarcoidosis was under control, only to learn that he was diagnosed with lung and colon cancer during the pandemic.
- I may have had to change the number of the expected twenty-thirty participants to only five during the pandemic.
- I may have had to continue the program via predominantly telecommunication with case participants during the pandemic. **BUT**

I found encouragement from the older adult participants of my program who showed me that ministry continues and can thrive at any age and that every day we live, God is saying; He can use you, and He is not done with you yet.

The Spirit of the living God is not only in creation. God blesses us all young and old through other forms, and technology is one of them. ***It's time for change!*** The primary way we can assist older adults with learning computer skills begins with patience.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL

AMALGAMATED CONSUMER INFORMATION: UNDERSTANDING THE
TECHNOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON OLDER ADULT
CONGREGANTS

By

JENICE E. JETER

A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL

New York Theological Seminary

June 30, 2020/Revised on October 23, 2020

Challenge Statement

As a Senior Citizen Advocate for over 25 years and minister of Union Baptist Church in Stamford, Connecticut, I believe we removed seniors from the digital age. Statistics show that only nine percent of seniors age 75 or over are comfortable with technology basics primarily due to age-related motor-skill decline. My demonstration project will create a transformative ministry of straightforward real-world digital methodologies and resources designed for seniors, through data analytics and relevant field studies.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING

The congregation at Union Baptist Church of Stamford (UBC) capacity comprises of approximately 1,500 members. Of which, 200 attend church regularly. We strive to embrace all by helping members and newer members to becoming active members. We glorify God by creating a loving and welcoming spiritual environment where the Spirit of God reigns. The ministry is to foster this concept of glorifying God in everything we do. Several ministry's at UBC ranges from Children's Choir, Children's Church, other Choirs, Deacon & Deaconess, Greeters, Helping Hand, Men's, Missionary, Nurses, Praise Dance, Progress, Sound, Trustee, Ushers, Women's to Autumn Gold (our senior citizen) ministries. Other ministries include specific community outreach programs such as Octoberfest (which continues to grow yearly and is one of our most prominent community outreach ministries pre-COVID-19) and Angel Tree, both of which are a part of our Prison Ministry. The most recent ministries are our Strategic Planning and Christian Meditation ministries. All of which allows the church to demonstrate the love of God in our lives and to the world.

One of the things that changed in our congregation that has taken place over the years was when a former Assistant Pastor, Reverend Leroy Parker, resigned from his post after approximately six years of servitude. Reverend Parker's departure was a significant change that altered the service environment's dynamics in terms of a somber feel that penetrated the atmosphere. Reverend Parker's resignation affected the youth ministry

most. We continued to praise God. We continued to glorify God. More specifically, we became concerned about the inability of our Pastor to retire. Reverend Parker's church's departure accounted for a transition that impacted the church growth for a few years. Each ministry was affected to some degree. Again, this change mainly affected the youth ministry. From my observation, Church membership declined and has yet to revive or regain the same or higher level of membership participation.

After the Assistant Pastor left the church, the newly assigned Assistant to Pastor, Dr. Michael G. Christie, was instrumental in keeping the church afloat, ministries engaged, and fostering yet another transition UBC would later face. Unfortunately, our prominent church leader, Deacon William Callion, Jr., and Former city Public Safety Director, chairman of the *Stamford* Police Foundation, and mayoral candidate, passed away. Deacon Callion Jr.'s passing away was a surprise and significant blow to the UBC family. Deacon Callion was instrumental in both shaping and assisting with sustaining the church for approximately 33 years. Today, our most considerable representation has been both the Assistant to the Pastor, Dr. Michael G. Christie, and our new leadership team.

Over the years, the church's existence has a conglomerate of pastoral leaders, laypeople, and other members like Deacon Callion. Today, our new leadership team is working diligently to stay abreast of technological advances to remain relevant, current, and capable, especially during the present calamities we face today and amidst future unforeseeable circumstances due to COVID-19. All of this profoundly impacts our church and this new leadership team. Our current Assistant to the Pastor is essential, viable, and open to change in this tech-savvy world.

Before COVID-19, UBC's churches' ministries include several recently implemented social engagement programs. These programs addressed the need for more interaction amongst members, such as Singles Ministry, Progressive Ministry (for 18-35+ members), and the Men's Locker Room ministry as examples. During such time, the church began to appear lackadaisical on both the idea and scarcely importance was placed on social interaction ministries for adults in particular within the church. Social interaction became a theme, and shortly afterward, a former member decided to have her wedding reception at the church in our Fellowship Hall. The rumor was there would be alcohol served. However, what appeared to be a tolerant, more laidback church environment created an opportunity for some to assume that our Senior Pastor, Reverend Dr. Robert W. Perry, would agree to allow alcoholic beverages in the church wedding reception. This idea created an uproar leaving Pastor deciding to address the circulating rumor. There were no significant resources affected by this rumor. However, Pastor Perry felt obligated to make a public announcement denouncing the gossip. This effect led to halting the social programs, and there were limited to no other social programs executed at the church since then.

A Senior Information Technology ministry will support UBC's content-related features and services, streaming services, and the UBC website. Other technological platforms or virtual means, not necessarily a social program, so there are social activities for older adult congregants. This congregation was offered a similar older adult technology program in the past. The application only lasted for a short while, and it uses.

The mindset of many changed dramatically as a result of this worldwide pandemic. Initially, there was resistance to streaming services before the COVID-19

epidemic. The COVID-19 crises now represent an opportunity to regroup, refocus, and revise to incorporate technological advances designed to sustain the church during other unforeseeable circumstances. Today, the astronomical cost may derail the opportunity to implement this technology and strategic communications program. Furthermore, as a result, a more economical and informational element to an older adult technology ministry would be readily embraced.

Our church covenant reflects our ministry, mission, and spiritually as a body of Christ. We are a congregation of baptized believers associated by the covenant in the Gospel's faith and fellowship. One of our commitments is to serve our racial/ethnic churches. Our interfaith relationships continue to grow, and our responsibilities to represent God in the world, acknowledging in fellowship that we serve the same one and only true living God.

Many other ministries best represent our congregations' commitments to cultural and social obligations: Black History Month, Octoberfest (in place of Halloween), Angel Tree (Prison Ministry program for children of incarcerated parents), the Helping Hand Ministry, which covers the history of Union Baptist Church of Stamford has been a journey starting with its founders. Today, Union Baptist Church is the oldest church in lower Fairfield County. We recently celebrated our 132nd Church Anniversary. Our church slogan is "The Church Where the Spirit of God Reigns." This slogan encompasses our stories, values, characteristics, and commitments that make up our founders' collective identity.

In 1888, twenty-five former slaves and descendants of former slaves organized Union Baptist Church, formerly known as Union Baptist Church Mission. This year

marked a significant period in the lives of African American citizens in Stamford, Connecticut. These African Americans relocated from southern states to settle in Stamford to make a new life with their families in Connecticut.

Our tradition comprises over 132 years of existence: preparations for communion services by our Deaconess and our Deacons' interactions following rituals and traditions still practiced today. Other traditions have changed over the years. One of which includes embracing women as clergy. Today, UBC has on record twelve women that served on our ministerial staff. Thanks to our Senior Pastor, Reverend Dr. Robert W. Perry.

Adhering to our articles of faith is part of our tradition. The New Hampshire Confession is our declaration of faith and practices consistent with all Baptist Churches' views in the New Hampshire State Convention in 1833. It began with 16 Articles of Faith and with 20 Articles of Faith in 1882. The articles are also consistent with the views of Baptist Churches in Connecticut. Our Baptist traditions belong to the Protestant denomination. We are part of the Connecticut State Missionary Baptist Convention, founded in 1904.

One of the longest tradition to which our congregation belongs is the installation of deacons. Deacons are members of the church body. Our deacon ministry oversees most of the programs, the church's work internally and externally, and community outreach initiatives. Another part of Union Baptist Church tradition is our involvement in local community leadership responsibilities, including education, medicine, politics, and government. Our relationships consist of a long history of community engagement. Some of the tension experienced with church members lead to splits over the churches 132 plus year span. As a result, other local churches that came out of Union Baptist Church were

birth and relocated within the community. Local Haitian churches in Stamford, Connecticut, included.⁹⁶

Union Baptist Church embraces women in ministry. As previously mentioned, there have been 12 women as clergy members at Union Baptist Church of Stamford. I believe there is more to join the ministerial staff in the foreseeable future. This unprecedented female clergy growth is excellent; unfortunately, there are still churches without women in ministry. I am often reminded of the resistance one of the clergy's women endured when joining UBC's clergy staff when women in the clergy were not embraced or allowed at UBC.

Today, we are a part of the Connecticut State Missionary Baptist Convention. In 1904 the convention was organized at the Messiah Baptist Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Our organization has grown from 11 church memberships to 80 church memberships. The cross is our symbol, Holy Communion and Baptisms are our rituals. The two things that distinguish the Baptist Church from other Christian Churches are that we are autonomous, having the right or power to self-government. Also, we dedicate babies rather than baptize them. We believe there are two great ordinances of the church – Baptism and Holy Communion. The ordinance of baptism by immersion as written in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe in Christ as Savior and Lord are baptized as they are physically able. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 8:26-38). Baptism is an outward sign of an inward spiritual renewal and rebirth.⁹⁷ The other of the two great ordinances is Holy

⁹⁶ Union Baptist Church of Stamford, 2019 *Celebrating 131 Years of The Union Baptist Church: Harvest - Sowing Healthy Seeds for Mind Body and Soul* (Union Baptist Church of Stamford, 2019).

⁹⁷ Lindsey Curtis, "Connecticut State Missionary Baptist Convention," <https://www.ctbaptist.org/index.php/about-us/what-we-believe> (accessed June 25, 2020).

Communion. The ordinance of Holy Communion, also known as the Lord's Supper, consists of the broken bread, the body of Jesus Christ, and the fruit of the vine-the shed blood of our Lord and Savior. It is a memorial of His suffering and death (I Corinthians 11:26); our fellowship and communion with all believers (Ephesians 4:4-6); and our prophetic expectation of His second coming (I Corinthians 11:26.)⁹⁸ Both of which summarizes our two significant sacraments.

The proclamation of the Word of God is an essential part of worship. An empty Holy Cross is the symbol used that is consistent with our rituals as it represents Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. We believe that religious liberty is a gift from God. We also believe that Holy men, inspired by God, wrote the bible. It is our doctrine that in Holy Communion, the whole substances of the bread and wine are not changed into the blood and body of Christ; it represents the blood and the body of Christ. Furthermore, our 14th, "Article of Faith," best describes our worldview beliefs and values: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer. Believers are Baptized, in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior.

It is our proclamation to our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. It is a prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the church members, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the

⁹⁸ Curtis, "Connecticut State."

dying love of Christ; always preceded by solemn self-examination.⁹⁹ As a whole, we honor our biblical truth without negotiation or compromise.

Recently, our Senior Pastor, Reverend Dr. Robert W. Perry, announced that he has planning to retire in May 2020 before COVID-19. Our church had begun conducting a self-study as the body of Christ, starting with our congregants and leadership team. This course of action prompted us to create a congregational questionnaire as part of our search for a new senior pastor.

Dr. Perry is recognized as the "Godfather" of preachers, and he is irreplaceable to many. Nonetheless, the process of searching for a new senior pastor was underway. We mailed out questionnaires with the hopes of compiling the information needed to assist in this selection process. Pastor Perry is a model senior pastor.

Our model of fellowship comprises of beliefs and values. For example, as a whole, we believe that women should not wear pants or trousers in the pulpit. I believe that it is acceptable for women to wear pants on the pulpit. In my opinion, it is not a sign of disrespect or of dishonoring God. That is my only view in terms of rituals and the pulpit.

Our church services pre-COVID-19 comprised of a congregation 95% African-American or of African descent. The cross's symbol is the only symbol we display as representing who we are as Christ's body. During the prelude to one of our Sunday Services streamed on May 31, 2020, our senior Pastor, Dr. Perry, gave a descriptive summary streamed online instead of views from the actual pulpit - of who we are as a

⁹⁹ Ibid.

church. He stated, "The kingdom of God is made up of God's people, which we call the church. The church is not a building; it is not brick and mortar. We are the people of God, wedded by the blood of Jesus Christ, bound as one; we are the church".¹⁰⁰

Yes, we are the church. Our missionary and deacon ministries are the two most important ministries that demonstrate decades of the most laborious groups' ongoing mission:

To marshal all the available resources and technologies to make known the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This good news which we proclaim must be authentic and a living witness in the lives of those who proclaim, praise, and practice it. Our mission must ensure that we are in partnership with God and deliverance from the bondage of economic oppression, racial bigotry, and social-political injustice with God's rule in our hearts. As a church, we foster and promote praise to our God, who gave us Jesus, who has set us free and made us whole.¹⁰¹

I believe that, like with the early church in biblical times, church congregations and Christian fellowship did not transpire without encountering power struggles, disagreements, vain aspirations, and pseudo-transformational leadership characteristics. Paul notes much of these behaviors in many of the epistles from Pauline's letters. Union Baptist Church of Stamford has its bout with tensions and conflicts amongst members. From my observations, most of this stems from successful church members who pay tithes regularly or go over and beyond tithe giving. These behaviors appear to have believed "Rites-of- Passage" undertones from these members. Moreover, their exclusivity behaviors aided in un-Christian-like behaviors. Of course, this is one example of power struggles from the pews, at least.

¹⁰⁰ Jenice E. Jeter, "Pentecost & Missionary Sunday/By Any Means Necessary," Union Baptist Church Stamford, CT, May 31, 2020, YouTube video, 27:17, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrUfUaYNePA>.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

A transformative leader's attributes lead to transforming others and is open to self-transformation along with those he or she leads. My Pastor, Dr. Perry, is the best representation of the appropriate usage of spiritual gifts' diversity. Jesus Christ led the way for us. Pastor demonstrates as humanly possible how we can strive to hone our spiritual gifts and the appropriate way to remain humble, always seeking to glorify God from whom the spiritual gifts are given and not of our works.

Pastor Perry's opinion always seems to gain the most significant measure of responsibility in the church. We believe in one God. We believe in Jesus, His only begotten Son. We believe in the death and the resurrection of Jesus, and we believe in eternal life.¹⁰² The spiritual pillars of our congregation are the Pastor, Deacons, and the Missionary Ministry. Our tithes and offerings' primary source of financial support offers the decision-making obtained from our leadership team. Today, this team comprises our Pastor, Reverend Dr. Robert W. Perry, our Assistant to Pastor, Reverend Dr. Michael G. Christie, our Trustee Chair, Wanda Hill, and other leadership team members. The informal channels are the office workers, primarily our office manager and ministry leaders.

A global coronavirus epidemic produced the type of pandemic that birth a new paradigm shift. How we live, how we interact with each other, how we now perceive our future goals, how we exercise our belief systems globally, and how church leaders are forced to re-imagine the possibilities and responsibilities of keeping the church afloat.

¹⁰² Jorge Pezo-Candelario, "Union Baptist Church of Stamford," <https://ubcstamford.org/> (accessed June 26, 2020).

Nonetheless, each church's responsibility is to reinvent multiple communication channels, primarily done through digital means today. Many churches are incapable or unable to offer streaming services or other technological outlets for delivering content. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the channels of communications utilized today and now work in our congregation's life are Zoom Meeting; Zoom is a software-based conference room used as an alternative solution to social distancing guidelines set by the state. We utilize Zoom for safety measures and to minimize and stop the spread of COVID-19. However, this interaction is excellent with some senior citizens; it is minuscule to an older adult with only a landline communication mode.

Today, the new setting in the life of Union Baptist Church is part of a global phenomenon. Pre-social distancing, I can be counted on to know what is going on in the life of Union Baptist Church of Stamford. The consensus is that we have to work together as a team to continue the church's work. Also, I am willing to discuss what is going on in the life of our church. Besides, it is a blessing to know that I can count on our deacons to understand what is going on in the church's life. These deacons are well trained, and they take their roles seriously. As a whole, the world's state hangs on the limbs of uncertainty, or life appears to be hanging in the balance, and its unanswered questions is a globally shared concern. Both the religious/spiritual and non-secular communities are part of this new set of "The Unknown."

Pre-COVID-19, Union Baptist Church was an inclusive church in many aspects; however, our cliques are no different from most organizations to various degrees. The most significant tensions and conflicts stem from members expecting leadership roles to carry out by popularity. When this is not the case, friction happens, and cliques create

divided walls that Jesus broke down. "For He is our peace; in His flesh, He has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us." (Eph. 2:14 NRSV).

How did we deal with affecting the church? For several years, we have incorporated administering questionnaires to church congregants and program participants. It has been one of the practices to observe our ministries and programs' effectiveness, both in the church and our local community. Some questionnaires are provided online, and the majority has given in-person. One of our fundamental practices is to divulge the results of these evaluations to the rest of the congregation. Assessments will be constructive methods used regularly.

Although Union Baptist Church is an inclusive organization, and we take pride in educating congregants and implementing strategies designed for spiritual growth individually and collectively. We had a senior ministry that was thriving pre-COVID-19 because of its revitalized outreach ministry. However, this older adult ministry would be instrumental in facilitating a new-age Senior-Centric Technology Ministry. The face-to-face interactions are contingent on the support from our leaders, deacons, and other congregants that are willing to partake in this initiative. Due to social distancing standards, today's setting forces one-on-one aspects of a Senior-Centric Technology Ministry contingent upon practicing safe guidelines, documentation, and researching best practices and resources available for seniors citizens that are both technologies illiterate to tech-savvy.

There is an unexpected, unimagined, and unpredictable new setting. Currently, an introduction to the setting is described as partly beneficial. How could that be? Well, pre-

COVID-19, the idea of conducting a technology program designed for seniors was a "cute" idea. There is nothing "cute" about preparing each member, every able body for ministry on any level. As a body of Christ, we are associated with the covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel also; our mission is to go into all the world and WIN the lost to Christ. Well, technology provides another platform for winning the lost to Christ. Today, seniors are alienated more than ever due to COVID-19. Most of the conversations today does not happen without mentioning our seniors and their inability to stay connected because of their limited access to the internet, digital devices, and fear of the new World Wide Web. I would probably gain more financial support and willing volunteers and other resources to assist me with a Senior-Centric Technology Ministry that ever imagined. Based upon UBC's current infrastructure, our technology ministry is being utilized adequately in the life, ministry, and mission and spiritually of our congregation. My Demonstration Project is an introduction to a new and evolving setting that may change again, even after this Demonstration Project is complete.

Due to safety measures, the Peer Visit necessary to complete this "Congregational Profile, will be completed at another date due to Social Distancing.

CHAPTER 2

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE

This Demonstration Project, tentatively entitled “*Using New Age Technology to Empower Seniors in the Community and the Church*,” was selected to develop an essential program designed to fill the void of minimal or non-existing technology programs within the elder community. This project will promote technology basics and foster comfort levels for seniors operating digital devices for personal, community, and ministry uses.

In many ways, this Demonstration Project proves to be imperative, particularly during the calamities we face today with the novel virus COVID-19. In some forms, this Demonstration Project can also represent a Disaster Recovery/Relief initiative for elders significantly impacted by unforeseeable and unpredictable crises.

According to the Hebrew and Christian oral traditions, the elders had a significant role in the faith's spreading and maintenance in ancient biblical times. The Hebrew Bible teaches of the importance of the role of the elderly in forming the early church. The elderly are as important today as they were in biblical times. This Demonstration Project will provide seniors with the tools to continue advancing the Gospel through technological means. Today, the elderly community struggles to find alternate ways to worship, and even simpler workflows and methodologies to engage with teleconferencing can be a challenge for them.

Besides, this program will provide the type of systematic change needed to cultivate a higher level of independence, especially given what we do not know about COVID-19's disproportionate impact on seniors. Therefore, my fundamental focus is to equip seniors with technological skillsets to improve an elder's cognitive and natural

progressions associated with aging. I believe this program will strengthen the physical and mental abilities of the elderly. Another aspiration of this Demonstration Project is to incorporate statistical evidence in support of this claim. This demonstration project will address this issue by creating a transformative Senior-Centric Technology Program. Most importantly, to build life-changing opportunities for elders to exercise independence levels as long as humanly possible.

Our challenges today pose a completely unexpected different set of concepts. One set of ideologies, methods, and standards will never be the same post-COVID-19. The Spirit of the living God is speaking to us louder than ever before. It is the "Spirit of God" guiding us and showing us that we need to change our mindsets and refocus to see beyond our myopic views. My 2019 Capstone entitled "The Spirit and Technology in the 21st Century: *The Advancement of Missionary Work*" would have been somewhat of a premonition with what we are facing today as a result of COVID-19. I stated that the Holy Spirit at the heels of the 2nd millennia as the Spirit emerges during the explosion of technological developments with uncanny foresight as we ventured into the 3rd millennia.¹⁰³ We must embrace a global crisis. Our simple change in the congregation and worldview fosters a spiritual revolution as God has shifted the atmosphere. Our new setting is virtual. This Demonstration Project is now centered on the new setting, and how do we provide an amalgamated set of standards and resources for all older adult congregants, at all levels of abilities. I believe that God is preparing us for what is to come, according to His will and according to His plan. Financial support for this project will vary.

¹⁰³ Jenice, E. Jeter, "The Spirit and Technology in the 21st Century: The Advancement of Missionary Work" (MA cap., New York Theological Seminary, 2019).

One of the most important means of financial support for a senior tech program will likely originate from donations and grants. Presently, digital devices can be attainable through direct connections within organizations, the community, and program resources. The transportation mode to transport seniors to and from the program(s) may be one of the program's most significant challenges depending upon location and financial support level.

There are several types of devices seniors need to stay relevant, i.e., the current iPhone capabilities, FaceTime with Doctors for virtual diagnoses, and other means to improve their quality of life. As technological advances evolve, the resources offered from this Demonstration Project will provide additional opportunities. One of the ideas is to put together a prospectus outlining the program's objective, agenda, timeframe, cost, information technology support to elicit elderly participants for the program. This Demonstration Project presents a revolutionary senior-centric technology ministry that will generate multiple tech-savvy initiatives for seniors in every group, race, and demographics as a social norm.

My Demonstration Project will be a model designed to be replicated and tweaked as new knowledge surfaces and as we evolve. The Site Teams' input is both crucial and necessary from conception to implementation of the program. The value of a Site Team member and his/her competencies is relevant. However, most importantly, their presence during the beginning, end, and assessment stages must be consistent for the program/ministries' success.

Again today, we are all faced with recognizing this new paradigm shift as a result of COVID-19. It is an honor to spearhead such a program. However, it is my personal

belief that seniors do not have a voice. As a senior citizen Advocate for over 25 years, I believe that seniors are a vital part of the future of technology. Seniors have such a wealth of knowledge many take for granted. All that we can learn from our elders in both biblical times and today can be in every new frontier. Knowledge is power. Knowledge births, unique experiences, and new expertise shapes our future. There is so much yet to discover.

This Demonstration Project will provide continuous hope for our elders, who are our most valued commodity and viewed as such. The Demonstration Project will continue the legacy of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr, a renowned and revered champion for Justice for the disenfranchised from all walks of life – older adults in particular. By incorporating the social activism initiatives on behalf of our seniors on continuous bases as technology evolves, new age programs or initiatives designed specifically for older adults must change as well.

CHAPTER 3 PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION

According to chapter 6 of Ernest T. Stringer's book, *Action Research*, communication should happen regularly. There should be ongoing communication by means available with Site Team members, stakeholders, and pertinent participants during this process are critical. During this global pandemic, the regularity of communication is the driving force since people cannot meet in what used to be normal circumstances. Stringer states that facilitators should communicate with each participant regularly and organize simple ways with similar or related tasks that can communicate. Such interactions may take the form of prearranged regular visits, telephone calls.¹⁰⁴ Certain aspects of this process have fostered more straightforward ways of communicating even during social distancing.

The environments that would generally be conducive for a plan of implementation to take place has changed. Utilizing the site team members for this stage in the process has also changed. Although these circumstances have halted, it has not eliminated the need to think creatively. During this time of mandated social distancing as the possibility of a mutated virus looms, the threat of a mutated version of Coronavirus could potentially change human interaction for years to come.

¹⁰⁴ Curtis, "Connecticut State."

What would a constructive plan of action look like today? This constructive action plan below was devised with the expectation and hoped that things would return to normal within a few months.

Goals and Strategies:

Goal 1: – Raise awareness among churches of the need to empower elderly Christians to comfortably utilize technological devices to continue promoting the Gospel in a relevant way. "For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life." Ephesians: 2:10.

Strategy 1: Create a focus group of elder participants (via teleconferencing, virtually, and in-person is possible) to view their current knowledge of biblical scriptures on technology. Retrieve responses to be used for a questionnaire to raise awareness pre and post COVID-19. (December 2020, Jeter, Christie, Goodison, Jenkins, Watson, Wilson, a representative of local NAACP's Senior Center Program – Stamford Chapter)

Strategy 2: Provide two sermons and one speaking engagement to provide biblical fundamentals. (December 2020, Jeter)

Evaluation of Goal 1: 75% of participants will complete a pre and post questionnaire on what they know about biblical scriptures on technology.

Goal 2: – Identify and build a “Strategy, Planning and Transformation” (STP) team that will disseminate, recruit, teach, and execute all aspects of this Senior-Centric Technology ministry and its components.

Strategy 1: Meet with selected Strategy, Planning, and Transformation team members and devise a plan. (December 2020, Jenice, Advisor, and Goodison/Site Team Member)

Strategy 2: Devise a training curriculum for a new team. Designate which team leaders will venture into senior homes. (December 2020, Jeter and Jenkins)

Evaluation of Goal 2: The goal is for 100% of the Strategy, Planning, and Transformation team members will support me in ministry from start to completion.

Goal 3: the team and I will develop this Ministry for Union Baptist Church Senior-Centric Technology Program in Stamford, Connecticut.

Strategy 1: Collaborate with Site Team Members and Union Baptist Church Leaders on execution, working with seniors within the church setting, and homebound socially-isolated senior members. (January 2021, Jenice, Dr. Christie).

Strategy 2: Implement a six week, one-hour Senior-Centric Ministry. (November-January 2021, Jenice, Site Team Members and Strategy, Planning and Transformation team)

Evaluation of Goal 3:

75% of participants will complete a post-survey design to assess mental and physical motor skills improvements and increase comfort levels for operating digital devices after participating in this Senior-Centric Technology Ministry.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Biblical

What was the elders' role in the Hebrew Bible to spread and maintain faith and its relevancy to the early church's formation? How can this role be translated in today's rapidly evolving tech-savvy society? Since the first century A.D., elders in New Testament times served as their congregation's spiritual leaders. They were given the ultimate authority and responsibility to ensure that their church remained on a Biblical course and its mission carried out.¹⁰⁵ How can more straightforward technological methods designed for seniors provide opportunities for elders to continue this role? How is teaching seniors to use digital platforms critical to the future of the church?

Social

What is the nature of social activism strategies used by Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. to continue the legacy of Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. began at The Abyssinian Baptist Church from a functionalist perspective by challenging the hegemonic institutions to protect senior citizens? As with social activism displayed by Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., today, this COVID-19 pandemic forces the need for change as seniors are faced with a real challenge of continuing the legacy of Adam Clayton Power, Jr. by appropriately protecting marginalized senior citizens.

¹⁰⁵ Curtis "Connecticut State."

Technical

Most elders struggle with reduced reactivity and motor-skills challenges making it difficult to adapt to today's communication advancements. How can a Senior Information Technology ministry and training program enhance seniors' cognitive and physical abilities for ministry and personal uses? Is it possible to create a technology ministry for elders without being face-to-face? What is the long-term impact of a Senior Information Technology ministry? Are there any methodological issues inherent in the Assessment of Technology Use for elderly participants from 65-76 years old and 77-90 years old?

CHAPTER 5 MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES

The Process:

The Site Team's chosen members unselfishly devoted time and energy to assist me in this thought-provoking process of competency assessment. The Site Team members listed in alphabetical order are Reverend Dr. Michael G. Christie (New Canaan, CT), Ricardo Goodison (Lithonia, GA), Earlene Jenkins (Bronx, NY), Phyllis Watson (Bronx, NY), and Dontay Wilson (Hatfield, PA).

On May 1, 2020, I forwarded emails to the Site Team Members (STMs) of the assessment process. Earlene Jenkins agreed to summarize and transcribe the assessments.

On May 16, 2020, I held a virtual meeting with the STMs via Zoom video communications services. Zoom provided a reliable “cloud” platform for teleconferencing during the COVID-19 pandemic and the country-wide social distancing mandates. At this meeting, we collected and examined the assessments individually and collectively.

Listed below is a summary of the Site Team's and the assessment of Ministerial Competencies derived from meetings to help me produce a well-developed Demonstration Project entitled "*Using New Age Technology to Empower Seniors in the Church and the Community.*"

The Assessments:

As Theologian – Minister Jeter understands the doctrine, scripture, sociology, and including the church's teachings related to the congregation members. She actively engages in biblical study and theological reflection. The candidate strongly feels the need to concentrate on the theological foundation that illustrates the multicultural context needed in an intentional and relevant way.

As Preacher/Interpreter of Sacred Texts – Minister Jeter's hermeneutical skills produce a reliable delivery, well-prepared organization of thought, and biblically-based interpretation, thought-provoking the congregation to spiritual growth. She is competent in her spirit-filled delivered, Christ-centered material. The candidate feels the need to focus on more extended prayer and meditation periods before delivering a sermon.

As Worship Leader – Minister Jeter is skilled in the interpretative reading of sacred scripture. She is a leader who can lead worship, reflecting the traditions of the Pentabaptist church. Minister Jeter can make devotion come alive for the congregation. The candidate expressed a deep desire to learn musical instruments such as the piano and organ to develop worship experiences helping worshipers participate purposefully through worship experience.

As Prophetic Agent – She includes her Pastor and others in the process of change as the Spirit leads her building coalitions for participation. As a prophet, she communicates a discernment of spiritual and social injustices at the risk of embracing social change, including in the church. Minister Jeter can discern both the moral and ethical implications of strategies for change. Candidate Jeter needs to research and study the interpretations of her dreams and be more aggressive in areas where multicultural and spiritual growth are concerns.

As Leader – Minister Jeter acknowledges and respects others' talents and skillsets and their ability to thoroughly facilitate duties effectively. She leads upwards by motivating others, delivers constructive criticism on an as-needed basis, and appreciates jobs well done. The candidate wants to grow and become a self-confident and effective leader.

As a Religious/Spiritual Educator - she has educational experiences and includes training and supervising other educational leaders and being open to dialogue. Minister Jeter can involve others in the learning process for all ages. The candidate expresses the desire to expand her consulting skills in administrative management and provide resources that emphasize inclusivity and spiritual development.

As Counselor – Minister Jeter is self-accepting and continues to grow as a person. She is approachable and is skilled at counseling. Minister Jeter, she is candid about her shortcomings and is easy going.

As Pastor – She encourages and involves newcomers to the church. Minister Jeter embodies nurturing attributes and is a good shepherd. The candidate will work to develop the gift of hospitality deliberately.

As Spiritual Leader – Minister Jeter is attentive to the journeys of others. She has an innate ability to be a useful spiritual guide and leader. Minister Jeter expresses the need to develop her skills and knowledge of spiritual development.

As an Ecumenist – Reaches out to other faith traditions and pursues opportunities for interdenominational worship and educational experiences. Minister Jeter believes in unity and has gained an appreciation for interfaith services, activities, and dialogues. The candidate vocalized her goal to be intentional about other denominations and faiths.

As Witness or Evangelist – Minister Jeter proclaims the Good News of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in various ways, including non-verbal and verbal. She knows her tradition well. Minister Jeter communicates the Gospel's message inside and outside of her community the Gospel's central message and truth effectively. The candidate seeks to ensure the future of the faith community and the integrity of its message.

As Administrator – With over 30 years of experience as both an Administrator and Administrative employee, she can identify resources and involve others in the decision-making process. Minister Jeter can establish concrete and realistic goals. The candidate feels the need to develop administrative skills more intentionally in today's tech-savvy world.

As Professional – Minister Jenice listens well, and she is open and personable. She has a positive attitude and is too enthusiastic about being productive, focused, and proficient, and is guided. The candidate will be intentional about focusing more attention on time management.

Financial Management – She understands financial matters and is vital to any ministry's successful implementation and provisions. Minister Jeter understands the importance of having a broad exposure to basic financial terms. The candidate will seek to develop grant writing skillsets. The candidate will strive to utilize all available digital devices and workflows to advance the ministry.

Technology/Social Media Management – Minister Jeter understands the importance technology has on ministry. She will continue to utilize best practices using social media mediums relevant to ministry to spread the Gospel of Christ. The candidate will seek to stay abreast of technological advancements and its impact on ministry.

Cultural Proficiency – She is sensitive to the world view of other cultures. She can identify one's own culturally specific practices —Minister Jeter's maturity level and self-awareness and emphasizing power and authority. The candidate will demonstrate respect for the cultural and religious values of others she serves, and she will abstain from imposing her values and beliefs on others.

I am grateful that the STMs identified professional abilities in ministry and allowing the Spirit to speak to me through them. The team provided me with a research-driven context, as outlined as part of this Demonstration Project process.

List of Ministerial Competencies Chosen for Development:

As Spiritual Leader - To develop my spiritual identity so that its impact enlarges my territory and is spiritually transformative in a tech-savvy community leader that promotes relevant change.

Strategies:

- I will engage in the study of pertinent literature on the Holy Spirit's work and prepare sermon series.
- I will record the sermon series about technology for this demonstration project.

Evaluation:

- I will obtain 80% of feedback in a written evaluation illustrating cohesiveness and clarity of the Holy Spirit's work and technology in the 21st Century.
- I will consider and document the relevance of the information obtained about technology's importance and the church's work.

Professional - To engage in administrative activities based on the Senior Technology Ministry's needs and provide necessary processes, schedules, and information to distribute and administer as needed.

Strategies:

- Identify the age and capabilities for technology training levels of seniors into 3 or 5 categories.
- Generate a System of Operation (SOP) process for each application or program to train seniors.
- I will attend General Assembly, a technology training firm launched in March 2019 in Stamford, CT. Comprise new information to disperse to the team(s) and seniors where applicable.

Evaluation:

- I will request a written evaluation from the Site Team members. This evaluation will illustrate that the bulk of the participants will conclude that the program reflects their abilities to operate selected digital devices with increased confidence.
- 90% of senior participants will complete an evaluation form at the end of each training session.

As Technological/Social Media Management - Stay abreast of technological advancements and its impact on ministry. Obtain a certificate offered upon completing 1-2 workshops and periodically update System of Operations (when applicable).

Strategies:

- I will interview top Information Technology executives committed to the evolution of technological platforms in digital communications.

Evaluation:

- I will begin inquiring about how the process entailed developing a mobile app designed for the elderly.
- I will survey the participants showing the effectiveness of the senior technology program.
- 75% complete the survey.

CHAPTER 6

EVALUATION PROCESS

Method of Evaluation 1:

In December 2020 (Goal 1 and Strategy 1) and (Goal 1 and Strategy 2), contact participants using multiple available means. Collect the questionnaires after the information provided by phone conversations, zoom links, email, face-to-face, or a user-friendly interface application with straightforward steps (like survey monkey). The results were compiled and measured, ensuring the latest analytical use like SmartSheet (a collaboration and work management application) to track progress and future analysis projects.

Method of Evaluation 2:

Group participation interest is accessed accordingly, and best practices are put in place to gather qualitative results on the effectiveness and progressed made on raising awareness after Strategy 1 and Strategy 2 in Goal 1. I will generate documentation to analyze and determine best practices to move forward for more significant outcomes in each instance.

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Ascending in 1937 to the pulpit of Abyssinian Baptist Church, the largest, wealthiest, and second oldest Baptist congregation in New York City, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. succeeded his Father, who had retired after 29 years. He would serve Abyssinian until 1971, retiring a year before his death. Becoming the eighteenth Pastor of a mainly conservative congregation in Harlem did not cause Powell to moderate his debonair lifestyle. If anything, he became more defiantly determined to live life on his terms while using his church platform to champion his social action agenda.

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**APPENDIX B:
UNION BAPTIST CHURCH MINISTRY PROPOSAL**

March 15, 2019

MINISTRY TITLE:

Information Technology Ministry -

Proclamation & Connection

PROPOSED BY:

Minister Jenice E. Jeter

Union Baptist Church

805 Newfield Avenue

Stamford, CT 06902

(203) 536-3048

jejeter@att.net

MISSION:

This ministry is designed to obtain and utilize available advancements in technology by acquiring the method of operations for the use of revolutionary applications necessary to assist with empowering members to foster an authentic and unyielding desire to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

PURPOSE:

In the “Year of New Visions”, this Information and Technology Ministry will provide an ongoing ministry that will assist members of the church with obtaining additional skill sets needed to optimize their ability to utilize technological means to increase their capacity to evangelize to the spiritually deprived. (Matthew 25:35-36).

Members will be empowered with additional resources and content needed to enhance ministry work with a world view in today's rapidly changing technological society.

The elements needed to make this ministry a success begins with the basics. These basics are contingent upon participation. The ultimate goal is to build a foundation to support this ministry and for this ministry to be a means of support for other ministries. Although most members are resistant to adapting to change, there is a hunger and an increased desire for seniors and others to become self-sufficient and knowledgeable about today's technology. Since technology is also an enabler and people are no longer required to be in the same room to hear the Gospel, attend Bible Study and fellowship, this ministry will help equip members with the ability to be unwavering and remain Kingdom minded (1 Corinthians 15:58) in our quest for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

TARGETED GROUPS:

In recognition of the generation gap, this is open to all age groups, but primarily geared towards the senior citizen community. The ultimate plan is to create subgroups of millennial participants to support this ministry and assist with teaching senior members.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Timeline and logistics:

- Promotional:
 - Pulpit announcements, bulletin, documents, flyers,
- A once-a-month program will make it easier to maintain
- Designated area
 - fellowship hall, intergeneration hall or library

- Monthly (preferably Saturday late morning)
 - 10:00am – 11:30am
- Tables, chairs, podium, video equipment/projector
- Transportation

BUDGET:

Free. Donations optional.

SESSIONS’S – “HOW TO’S”:

- Utilizing current programs available to UBC for obtaining additional resources and content materials.
 - Right Now Media
 - Dig-In
- Safety First
 - Pros and Cons of technology
 - Password protection
 - Scams and Fraud
- Uploading UBC content
- Tablets
- Applications
- Phone Apps
- Digital Gaming
- Social Media
 - Facebook
 - Snapchat

- Pinterest
- Instagram
- Vine
- Twitter
- Streaming
- Books are online now
- Group “Info-Share” sessions
 - Provide updates on usefulness of ministry
 - Successes and challenges
 - Spreading the Gospel?

CREATE CONTENT FOR ONLINE DISTRIBUTION:

- Materials provided by Reverend Dr. Robert W. Perry and Reverend Dr. Michael G. Christie
 - How to encourage “The pledge of salvation”
 - Provide the content needed for salvation pledges
 - Content approval of church office and/or UBC Leadership Team

EVALUATION:

- Provide periodic surveys to group
 - Review and provide survey feedback
-

CONCLUSION:

In addition, to continuously researching new software and technology to support UBC initiatives. This ministry will support existing ministries:

- Reverend Synethia Epps, Hospital/Nursing Homes Ministry
 - Support additional ways Reverend Epps can continue to be useful with technology incorporated into her ministry.
 - Minister Omri E. Lavine, Ministry of Visitation
 - Provide support to Minister Lavine on the use of and effectiveness of technology incorporated into his ministry
-

- Research & get data points
- Leaning towards a must lesser audience
- Banking online
- Technology can be leveraged across any of the ministries
- Create a team of support/partner with others/what value I can bring

**APPENDIX C:
LARGE FONT/ZOOM DIAL-IN NUMBERS**

**UNION BAPTIST CHURCH OF STAMFORD
ZOOM MEETING DIAL-IN NUMBERS
(FOR STREAMING SERVICES)**

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE - @ 10:30 AM

PHONE NUMBER: 1-929-205-6099

CODE: 822-6768 – 0186 # #

BIBLE STUDY - @ 6:30 PM

PHONE NUMBER: 1-929-205-6099

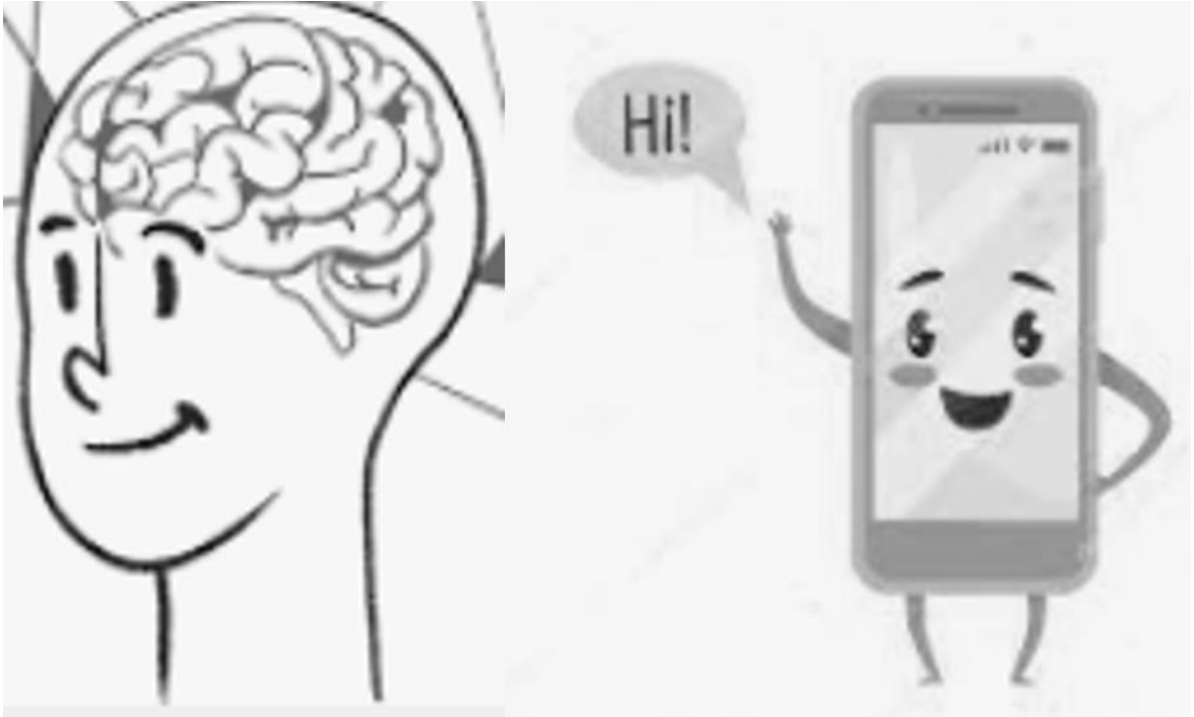
CODE: 203-322 – 0883 # #

PRAYER AND PRAISE SERVICE - @ 8:00 PM

PHONE NUMBER: 1-929-205-6099

CODE: 203-322 – 0882 # #

APPENDIX D:
THE INFLUENCE OF CARTOON FACIAL FEATURES



APPENDIX E:
CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS: QUESTIONNAIRE

#1: [Mother Blanche Sumpter](#)

- *On a scale of 1-5, with # 1 feeling Frustrated to # 5 feeling Optimistic, please rate the following:*

- Not being able to connect to the Internet during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

1	2	3	4	<u>5</u>
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Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

Not being able to access live streaming church services.

1	2	<u>3</u>	4	5
----------	----------	-----------------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

- How did you feel being away from the church before gaining access to live streaming services?

1	2	3	4	<u>5</u>
----------	----------	----------	----------	-----------------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

- How did you feel when your family members were unavailable to assist you with connecting to the internet or teaching you basic computer skills?

1	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	4	5
----------	-----------------	-----------------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS: QUESTIONNAIRE

#2: Reverend Synethia C. Epps

- *On a scale of 1-5, with # 1 feeling Frustrated to # 5 feeling Optimistic, please rate the following:*

- Not being able to connect to the Internet during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

Not being able to access live streaming church services.

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

- How did you feel being away from the church before gaining access to live streaming services?

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

- How did you feel when your family members were unavailable to assist you with connecting to the internet or teaching you basic computer skills?

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS: QUESTIONNAIRE

#3: Reverend Geraldine L. Harris

- *On a scale of 1-5, with # 1 feeling Frustrated to # 5 feeling Optimistic, please rate the following:*

- Not being able to connect to the Internet during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

1	2	3	4	<u>5</u>
----------	----------	----------	----------	-----------------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

Not being able to access live streaming church services.

1	2	<u>3</u>	4	5
----------	----------	-----------------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

- How did you feel being away from the church before gaining access to live streaming services?

1	2	3	4	<u>5</u>
----------	----------	----------	----------	-----------------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

- How did you feel when your family members were unavailable to assist you with connecting to the internet or teaching you basic computer skills?

1	2	<u>3</u>	4	5
----------	----------	-----------------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS: QUESTIONNAIRE

#4: Deacon Dessie Jenkins

- *On a scale of 1-5, with # 1 feeling Frustrated to # 5 feeling Optimistic, please rate the following:*

- Not being able to connect to the Internet during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

Not being able to access live streaming church services.

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

- How did you feel being away from the church before gaining access to live streaming services?

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

- How did you feel when your family members were unavailable to assist you with connecting to the internet or teaching you basic computer skills?

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS: QUESTIONNAIRE

#5: Reverend Mandie R. Richardson

- *On a scale of 1-5, with # 1 feeling Frustrated to # 5 feeling Optimistic, please rate the following:*

- Not being able to connect to the Internet during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

Not being able to access live streaming church services.

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

- How did you feel being away from the church before gaining access to live streaming services?

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

- How did you feel when your family members were unavailable to assist you with connecting to the internet or teaching you basic computer skills?

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Frustrated *Not worried* *Optimistic*

APPENDIX F:
CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS: FAMILY DYNAMICS

- Case Study #1
 - *Age 99* 6 Children 10 Grandchildren 13 Great grands
- Case Study #2
 - *Age 82* 3 Children 1 Grandchildren 0 Great grands
- Case Study #3
 - *Age 79* 2 Children 2 Grandchildren 0 Great grands
- Case Study #4
 - *Age 72* 0 Children 0 Grandchildren 0 Great grands
- Case Study #5
 - *Age 81* 7 Children 17 Grandchildren 14 Great grands

APPENDIX G: SITE TEAM MEMBERS: ASSIGNMENTS

JENICE E. JETER: NEW YORK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY DOCTORAL PROGRAM 2019-2022					
Updated May 2020					
The below list of Site Team Members are designated to provide encouragement, support, guidance, and feedback at all stages of the planning and execution of the Demonstration Project.					
Site Team Member	Assignment Description	Task - Assist Candidate:	Task Completed Y/N	Meeting Dates/Times	Next Steps/Comment(s): Indicate ministerial competencies, process, status, additional, and/or combined task.
Ricardo A. Goodiss VP, Global Tech & Client Support & Past Sr. Tech for Clevelo Dollar Ministries	1) Aid assessment of Bible fundamentals/setting EYP: Information Technology Initiatives	a) Identify spiritual practices b) Transformative social change c) Visionary innovation d) Check logic, organization of thought and fact checking		2020: 4/29, 5/1, 5/3, 5/26,	6) Religious/Spiritual Educator 7) Counselor 12) Administrator 13) Professional
Rev. Dr. Christie Assistant to Pastor - Union Baptist Church Stamford, CT	2) Competency Assessment and Site Team Facility Director	a) Establish role of Minister b) Functions expected/required c) Assessing religious accuracy and style		5/12/2020	1) Witness or Evangelist 12) Administrator 13) Professional
Dontag Wilson Physician Acct. Exec.	3) Problem/Task Analyst	a) Define anticipated issues before (#1) and after (#2) b) Assess ministry needs, resources and prospects		2020: 5/16	2) Preacher 3) Worship Leader 7) Counselor 9) Spiritual Leader
Phyllis Watson Ret. NYC Bus Operator	3) Problem/Task Analyst	a) Define anticipated issues before (#1) and after (#2) b) Assess ministry needs, resources and prospects			9) Spiritual Leader 12) Administrator 13) Professional
Earlene Jenkins NYC Transit Operator	3) Problem/Task Analyst	a) Define anticipated issues before (#1) and after (#2) b) Assess ministry needs, resources and prospects		2020: 5/1, 5/2, 5/12, 5/16,	3) Worship Leader 8) Pastor 12) Administrator 13) Professional
JENICE E. JETER: NEW YORK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY DOCTORAL PROGRAM 2019-2022					
(CONT'D)					
Updated May 2020					
The below list of Site Team Members are designated to provide encouragement, support, guidance, and feedback at all stages of the planning and execution of the Demonstration Project.					
Site Team Member	Assignment Description	Task - Assist Candidate:	Task Completed Y/N	Meeting Dates/Times	Next Steps/Comment(s): Indicate ministerial competencies, process, status, additional, and/or combined task.
Ramona Baker-Duh IT Assistant	3) Problem/Task Analyst and IT Support	a) Define anticipated issues before (#1) and after (#2) b) Assess ministry needs, resources and prospects		2020: 5/16	7) Counselor 9) Spiritual Leader 13) Professional
Mitch Vest (2020 & 4) TBD Social Worker/Psychologist Westover Magnet School Champion of Youth Bklist					
Rev. Dr. Christie Assistant to Pastor - Union Baptist Church Stamford, CT	5) Site Faculty Director	a) Onsite monitoring Demonstration Project b) Confirm implementation and completion			
Ricardo A. Goodiss VP, Global Tech & Client Support & Past Sr. Tech for Clevelo Dollar	6) EYP: Information Technology Initiatives	a) Provide ongoing feedback during the writing stage			
Rev. Dr. Christie Assistant to Pastor - Union Baptist Church Stamford, CT	7) Designated Hooder	a) Scheduled Hooder for graduation			

**APPENDIX H:
SITE TEAM MEMBER “THANK YOU” LETTER**

*Jenice E. Jeter
91 Strawberry Hill Avenue, Unit 729
Stamford, CT 06902*

August 4, 2020

Ricardo A. Goodison,
Executive Vice President
Information Technology Initiatives
c/o New York Theological Seminary Site Team
6010 Fairing Drop
Lithonia, GA 30038

Dear Ricardo,

Thank you for your participation. I am honored that you have decided to share in my scholastic endeavors. As a Doctor of Ministry candidate, I continuously ponder on my dissertation for my action research study and its moving parts. As a Site Team member, you represent an integral part of my new chapter. I must reiterate my gratitude for your inspiration, support, and counsel during this journey.

Please note: I included the following information we previously discussed for your review:

- May 21, 2022, is my expected graduation date.
- Site Team Member – “Certificate of Participation”
 - You will receive a “Certificate of Participation” from New York Theological Seminary upon my completion of the program.

The *Certificate of Participation* represents a token of my appreciation. Your participation is strictly voluntary. Our communication during this process is based upon your availability and at your leisure. Not only are you a valued Site Team member, but your expertise and competencies shared are priceless. Thank you, Ricardo!

Stay safe; stay well.

|

Sincerely,

Jenice E. Jeter, MA, MSA, DMin (Candidate)

***Embracing God's Gift of Technology: Communicating the
Spirit's Message through Technology***

By Jenice Jeter

Introduction

“You are the salt of the Earth.

But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor?”

Matthew 5:13

Many of us often go through our lives not thinking about how we communicate and interact with one another. Most times, the words we speak roll off the tongue without a second thought. But everything that surrounds us, inside and out – our words, actions, relationships – maintains meaning.

The English word “salary” stems from the Latin word “salarium,” which translates to “salt money.” In the days of the Greeks and Romans, wages were paid in the form of salt because of its sheer value to society as a scarce and expensive commodity. The Romans said, “There is nothing more useful than sun and salt.”

When Jesus, the son of the living God, referred to us as Salt of the Earth, He spoke of the unconditional love, and light we bring to the Universe. Some may refer to this as the energy we bring. He compared us to salt's three most important characteristics – its value, role as a preservative, and necessary flavor.

In “*Lord and Life-Giver: Spirit Today*,” Laurenti Magesa writes, “*The most basic and overriding assumption in African indigenous philosophical and religious thought is that*

each and every aspect of creation possesses its own vital energy.”¹⁰⁶

In the way that salt was valuable to the Romans, we, as His disciples, are extremely valuable. In one way or another, every person impacts the world, setting off a series of events without which society would not be as it is today.

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

(Matthew 6:33)

We must keep God first in our lives as we exist to bring harmony to the environment around us by following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and spreading the word of God.

One of the reasons for salt’s immense value was its ability to preserve. Before the time of refrigerators and freezers, there were only a few ways of preservation. The most widely successful one was by way of saline solutions – for food and even for the preservation of bodies before burial. Salt has now become the most standard ingredient in modern-day life – and in the way that salt was and still is a crucial component for preservation, we are essential to preserving goodness within society, preventing it from deterioration. As human beings, we are inclined to succumb to temptation and poor influences.- Rev. Rick Reed, a senior pastor at the Metropolitan Bible Church in Ottawa, states that *“Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s instructions, introducing sin and death into the creation (Romans 5:12). The image of God in humanity was not erased, but it was effaced. As parents pass along physical characteristics to their children, so too did our first parents passed along a damaged spiritual DNA to all of us. We are now born with a bent towards sin. We are inherently sinful.”*¹⁰⁷

But in acknowledging and understanding our characteristics and shortcomings, we must strive daily to work against the temptation to preserve our morality, as well as that of our communities, and we must allow the Will of God (not our will) to take precedence in our lives.

¹⁰⁶ Murray Paul, Irarrazabal Diego, Bingemer Maria-Clara. *Lord and Life-Giver Spirit Today*. London, UK: SCM Press, 2011.

¹⁰⁷ *Ask the Religion Experts: Are people inherently sinful?* (2012, February 19). Ottawacitizen. <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/ask-the-religion-experts-are-people-inherently-sinful> (accessed November 8, 2021)

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, salt brings flavor to the world. There are very few things on this Earth that you will not find at least a pinch of salt – most prominently, in the food we cook, eat and share with others. Flavor has become a unifying commonality across cultures, religions, and geographies – it brings people together.

Salt not only brings flavor to our foods, but it also creates a thirst. As His disciples, Jesus expects us to bring flavor into people's lives in the form of joy and passion – and in doing so, He also intends for us to relay a thirst for His word. We aim to show non-believers the appeal and the importance of Christianity through the way we behave and navigate our daily lives, and we should strive to encourage non-believers to follow in His footsteps.

“On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” Now, this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified..”

(John 7:37-39)

This should also serve as a reminder that our saltiness is central to our being as believers – and we can lose it. In ‘*Salt for Society*,’ W. Philip Keller writes, “*The peculiar property of salt is that even though it may have lost its pungency, it still retains one very devastating potency. This rare and remarkable material can still destroy plant life on the land; the same principle applies in the case of the Christian. Either our lives are counting for good and for God, or they are making an impact for evil and the enemy.... The way we live, the things we say, the attitudes we entertain, the lifestyle we adopt... are continuously producing either positive or negative results in society.... Our lives, whether we are aware or not, either count for God or against Him. There simply is no middle ground.*”¹⁰⁸

As we stray from His Word, we lose our saltiness. Surrounded by non-believers, accompanied by the inherent tendencies of our fleshly nature and human desires towards sinning, contrary to the will of God. It is easy to be swayed in the direction of sin. Sin is a transgression against the law and character of God. All unrighteousness is sin. We cannot

¹⁰⁸ Keller, P. W. (1981). *Salt For Society* (Edition Unstated ed.) [E-book]. Word Aflame Press.

bring value to those around us if we do not value the importance of our walk with God.

Because as Jesus said, what good is salt if it has lost its flavor?

As human beings on this Earth, we hold the utmost power above all other species. We have been created as higher beings with intelligence and talent. Consequently, we have brought forth innovations and technology that the generations before us could not. With our strength and grit, we have built communities from the ground up. But in discovering our ability to create, we have also established our ability to destroy.

According to Magesa, on African Spirituality, *“If the word is spoken or intended in concord, it brings blessings. If, on the contrary, it is spoken carelessly in anger or for evil intentions, it can wreak havoc to community relationships and, consequently, to universal harmony in general.”*¹⁰⁹ We cannot lose focus.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

(Matthew 6:33)

It is clear that as individuals and as members of communities – how we carry ourselves through life – has a direct impact on our world, as well as on our relationship with God. As disciples, we have a duty to spread His word as far and wide as we can reach.

And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

(Mark 16:15)

In doing so, we are not just fulfilling our destiny, but we are pushing for harmony with our fellow believers and beyond. Hence, the butterfly effect – we bring forth new believers, they do the same, and so on. In order to achieve and maintain our virtue, we must remember our roles as Salt of the Earth. While we play a crucial role in the lives of others and in bringing our communities to the highest standards of God, our lives are also impacted by those around us. Like our families, our friends, our colleagues, and our belief system.

In *“The Spirit of Christ as Entelechy,”* David Coffey asserts that *“Scripture supports two interpretations of the expression ‘Spirit of Christ.’ The first, widely known and*

¹⁰⁹ Magesa, L. (2013). *What Is Not Sacred?: African Spirituality*. Orbis Books.

*accepted, is that in this capacity, the Holy Spirit, sent by Christ from heaven, renders Him present and active in the Church. The second, not at all widely known, is that in which the Spirit is the Spirit of God the Father seeking out through history the Christ to whom he will be given, and hence to whom he will belong, in all fullness. This is the Spirit of Christ as entelechy. In this capacity, the Spirit is given to many people before the time of Christ, orienting them to Him as their savior. This function is at work from the beginning of the human race.”*¹¹⁰

As entelechy, The Holy Spirit comes to us as a guide. As we have now established, to be Salts of the Earth, we must be secure in our own beliefs – and the Holy Spirit helps us do so, by leading and guiding us.

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”

(John 16:7-8,).

In its essence as a guide, The Holy Spirit teaches and reminds us of all Jesus’ teachings so that we may not stray from the biblical patterns and focus on our conduct and character.

The Spirit also works to maintain God’s presence in our lives, constantly reminding us of our journey and keeping us from declining down the wrong path. Through this constant presence, we are brought closer to God and closer to the truth – the Holy Spirit is God’s Spirit; it knows the thoughts of God and reveals those thoughts to believers.

In *‘The Go-Between God: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission,’* John Taylor states, *“From within the depths of its being [the Spirit] urges every creature again and again to take one more tiny step in the direction of higher consciousness and personhood; again and again he creates for every creature the occasion for spontaneity and the necessity for choice, and at every turn, he opposes self-interest with a contrary principle of sacrifice, of*

¹¹⁰ Coffey, David. "The Spirit of Christ as Entelechy." *Philosophy and Theology*, 2001: 363-398.

existence for the other...”¹¹¹

The Holy Spirit empowers our flavor by bestowing its own attributes on us that we may express to others, enhancing their thirst, and guiding them on the same path to being true believers. And as the Spirit helps us to guide others in the correct path, it also supports us in battling our own weaknesses and temptation.

“But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.^[a] The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

(John 4:14)

As the Scripture states in Romanos, Chapter 12:5

“So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another”

(Romans 12:5)

Keeping in mind this biblical reference to the representation of the body of Christ and our being a collective whole when it comes to this body, the following verses from 1 Corinthians are imperative:

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now, if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they

¹¹¹ Taylor, J., V. (1975). *Go-between God: Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission* (Revised ed.). SCM Press.

were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

(1 Corinthians 12-27)

In ‘*God Inside Out: Notes Toward a Missionary Theology of the Holy Spirit*,’ Stephen Bevans cites “*It is the Spirit that renews and restores life, giving flesh and breath to dry bones (Ez.37:1-14) and turning hearts of stone into hearts that beat again (Ez.36:25-28).*”¹¹²

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

(1 Corinthians 1:18)

The Holy Spirit acts as a mark of adoption for us as God’s children and also works in the lives of new believers to give them eternal life. He provides all believers – existing and new – the security we need to give ourselves fully to him. And through sanctification, the Spirit ensures that we will not indulge the sinful acts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-21) but will bear the good fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25).

Humans make new discoveries, create new inventions, and form new relationships with each passing day. While we do not know what tomorrow will bring, we can learn to embrace the world as it exists around us, working to protect and improve it. In doing our part,

¹¹² Stephen Bevans, SVD, “*God Inside Out: Notes Toward a Missionary Theology of the Holy Spirit*,” 2017, <https://sedosmission.org/old/eng/Bevans.html> (accessed February 7, 2019).

we can elevate those around us through the word of God – and with each new generation come new ways for us to do so. That includes technology.

End of Introduction

****Formatted copy per synopsis***

APPENDIX J:
SERMON: “BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY”

MINISTER JENICE E. JETER

Sunday, May 31, 2020

Union Baptist Church of Stamford

Senior Pastor: Reverend Dr. Robert W. Perry

PRAYER:

“Father God in the name of Jesus, we thank you for this day. Thank you God for your Grace and your mercies that are new every day. Thank you, Father God, for life. Thank you, Father God, for using me your simple servant, Father God. I pray God, in the name of Jesus that you would hide me behind the cross the, God. Use, me God. Decrease me, Father God, and increase you 1 God in the name of Jesus. Amen.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

“First, I would like to give acknowledgements to our Senior Pastor, Reverend Dr. Robert W. Perry for 47 years of service. I am grateful to God to be one of his sheep. And I also wanted give honor to Reverend Christie and all of my colleagues in the faith.”

SCRIPTURE:

“The scriptures for this morning will be coming out of the book of Ephesians. Ephesians, chapter1 verses 2 and 3. And it reads, *‘Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:’* Amen.” (Eph 1:2-3 KJV).¹¹³

¹¹³ The King James Version is used for this sermon.

SERMON TITLE:

“BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY”

THE MESSAGE:

“The book of Ephesians is an address to a group of believers who are rich beyond measures in Jesus Christ, yet, living as beggars. And only because they are ignorant of their wealth. Basically -

- They were ignoring, or they lack to take notice of the blessings bestowed upon them.
- Their prosperity is bestowed upon them.
- Their heavenly treasures in heaven are bestowed upon them.

In the book of Ephesians, the King James Version, I have provided a chapter-by-chapter summary of how this letter, written by Paul the Apostle reads. Paul designed this letter to teach Christians -

- How to build
- How to maintain
- How to thrive in God’s kingdom
 - Even in the face of adversity

It is believed that Paul may have written this letter to the Ephesians during his first imprisonment in Rome. This message is also a reminder for us today, that we too must stay the course, no matter what.

Paul being spiritually led, wrote the letter to the church at Ephesus because there was a need to establish organization during a time of confusion. For the Ephesian church

there was a desperate need to create the type of instruction in midst of chaos, in the midst of uncertainty while Paul was in prison.

This epistle is addressed to the saints to remind them on their inheritance, to remind them of their blessings. The message was transmitted in the form of a letter which was a circulatory document. This circulatory letter went from the church in Ephesus, then it circulated in neighboring local churches, and the letter kept circulating, transmitting Paul's message to remind the church -

- To stay the course
- To be relentless
- Beyond measure
- And, by any means necessary

The book of Ephesians is rich with the rhetoric of worship and doctrine and it is crucial to be used as a tool to remind us today as Paul did with the saints at Ephesus to be warriors for the almighty God, even in the midst of confusion. Our circumstances today don't minimize the need to be warriors for the almighty God despite of what we face today.

In verse 2, *'Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ -'*

- Paul reminds them of the blessings, grace, and peace.
- Paul reminds them of the source of these blessings from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And, in the midst of calamities we are reminded today through the word of God that We are a blessed people of God -

- Grace, that man cannot give you.
- The peace of God that man cannot provide for you.

We are a blessed people of God. We have to trust God. We are reminded that we are blessed, and we have to trust God no matter what we face. This pandemic is not going to destroy you. I'll say that again, this pandemic is not going to destroy the people of God. The Will of God is going to manifest in your life -

- If you love Him
- If you have faith in Him
- The Will of God will manifest in your life. If you trust Him.

The Spirit of the living God is still at work. The Spirit of the living God is always at work. And Paul wanted to remind them that they must stay the course, even though Paul was in prison, he reminded them that they needed to stay the course regardless of what they were facing. And regardless of what he was facing he stayed the course.

Verse 2, for *'Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.'* God will provide you with the grace and the peace of God you need to endure during these times. I'm going to say that again, God will provide you with the grace and the peace of God you need during these times. Amen.

Verse 3, *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.'* Paul emphasizes *all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ* -

- Spiritual blessings according to the riches of His grace

- Spiritual blessings which He poured upon us in all wisdom and insights making known to us the mystery of His Will, according to His purpose, according to His plan.

Which God our Father, set forth, in Christ, as a plan to unify His people. Unify all things in Him. Things in heaven and things on earth. God has a plan. God has a purpose for your life. Amen.

Paul wrote this circulatory letter and in order for the church at Ephesus to understand that the work of the Holy Spirit doesn't stop because he was in prison. Now today, some of us feel like we are in prison. We feel like our world was turned upside down, but Paul knew that the work of the church must continue. Paul used the only means he had, and it was through his circulatory letter that transmitted the message of the Gospel, the message of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And today, we are reminded of Paul's imprisonment that meant he had to deal with his calamity from where he was. Today, we have to deal with what we are facing from where we are and –

- Be relentless
- Be unwavering

Because the work of the church must continue in the Name of Jesus, right from where you are –

- Right in your house
- I don't care if you are in prison
- I don't care if you are not able to go to work
- Wherever you are

The work of the church must continue in the Name of Jesus. This pandemic seemed to have stopped some of us in our tracks. But God wants you to know that today the Spirit of the living God is showing us that we need to utilize whatever means we have available no matter what that technological mean is –

- Even if you have a flip phone
- Even if you have a tablet
- Even if you have a laptop
- Even if you have a computer

Whatever it is. Utilize whatever means you have to continue the work of the church by *any means necessary*. Paul wanted to remind them not only to continue the work, but he also wanted to remind them not only of who they are, but whose they are. And today, we need to be reminded of who we are in Christ. And be reminded –

- To walk the walk that we promised God when we gave our life.
- To talk the talk that we promised God when we gave our life
- Even if it is from our bedroom - in the Name of Jesus.

Yes, we have to be relentless -

- To be reminded of our walk with God.
- And be reminded of the nature of the church,
- The purpose of the church,
- For we ARE the church.

And Paul is reminding us that we need to be the church by *any means necessary*. Matthew 16:18-19 says, ‘*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will*

give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' (Matt. 16:18-19 KJV). Be the church!

Today in this technological savvy-world, we have to remember we have to be the church. Paul had insight. We too have insight. The Spirit of the living God wants us to utilize our insights and *be the church!* –

- Every member
- Every able body
- Young and old
- Each one – teach one

Being forced indoors, that's okay. Don't let it stop you. Do whatever you need to do. Don't let it stop you from –

- Being a Christian and what you promised God.
- Be focused on His will
- Be focused on His plan
- And be the church!

When you gave your heart to God, you gave God a promise and whatever that conversation was. I know for me, I said, 'Father God, not my will God, but your Will God. Not my way God, your way God. Whatever you want me to do Father God, use me Father God anyway You see fit.' And even though I am in doors, it does not stop me from completing the work of the church. Matthew 25: 35a says, '*For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink.*' (Matt. 25:35a KJV).

- There are people out there that need to hear from God's people.

- There are people out there that are spiritually hungry.
- There are people out there that are spiritually deprived
- There are people out there that are depressed
- There are people out there that are suicidal
- There are people out there dealing with all kinds of levels of anxiety

And we can't sit and be complacent because we cannot be in the house of God, be the church from wherever you are -

- We need to reach out to those that are lost
- Those that don't know God
- Those in your family that walked away from God

We need to be the church by any means necessary. Matthew 24:36 says, '*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*' (Matt. 24:36 KJV). Eschatologically speaking, the end times, the end times, we have to be the church. We don't know when God is coming, but we need to make sure that we get our life right with God, so that when God comes, we can ready. But right now, right now in the meantime, we must continue the work by any means necessary and be the church. God is calling us all, young, and old, to utilize whatever means necessary to be the church! The word of the Lord. Amen."¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Union, "Pentecost".

APPENDIX K:
AMALGAMATED RESOURCES: INTRO & WEBSITES

AMALGAMATED RESOURCES: INTRODUCTION

It is customary for consumers to share information and relevant resourceful content to help improve their livelihood, independence, and overall wellbeing.

This dissertation aims to encourage churches and communities to use info-share as a method to keep older adults abreast of available resources and services to aid in their growth in this technologically savvy world. However, during this action research process, my theory is not all older adults will ever be privy or capable of navigating the internet and other social services available to them. For those older adults, who are tech-savvy and may find these resources valuable, the list must consist of continuous updates and expansions deemed viable to the expeditious growth of all evolving humankind. If there is any major takeaway from this dissertation, it would be that churches and society cannot ignore older adults *any* longer!

AMALGAMATED RESOURCES: WEBSITES

VIRTUAL/REMOTE ELDERCARE ASSISTANCE

Amazon Launches its \$19.99 per Month ‘Alexa Together’ Elder Care Subscription for Families | TechCrunch. <https://techcrunch.com/2021/12/07/amazon-launches-its-19-99-per-month-alexa-together-elder-care-subscription-for-families/>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

“Amazon’s eldercare notification and active-engaging for family members.”

...Amazon today announced the official launch of the **Alexa Together** subscription service, aimed at families caring for elderly members who are still living independently but need extra support. The feature, **first introduced** at the company’s fall 2021 event, expands on Amazon’s existing product Alexa Care Hub and packages it as a \$19.99 per month or \$199 per year subscription service.

Alexa Care Hub was the company’s first attempt at turning Alexa devices in the home into a tool for caring for aging family members. That service included a set of features that would allow family members to keep an eye on older parents and other loved ones — with their permission — and could be altered to certain activities, like if the family member had called out for help, for example.

Alexa Together expands on the Care Hub feature set to combine access to an emergency helpline, fall detection response features, a remote assist option that allows family members to manage settings on the elderly person’s device and an activity feed for family members that notifies them when their loved one is active — engaging with Alexa or other smart home devices, or notified when there’s been a lag in that usual activity.

Vitruual Senior Care | Remote Elder Care Services – BrioCare.
<https://www.briocare.us/virtual-home-care/>. (accessed March 22, 2022).

“BrioCare works with home care companies that offer ‘Virtual Homecare services’ using the Briocare platform. Our virtual care partners help and support older adults’ age in place in the comfort of their homes. Caregivers & families can connect with us or our local partners to get started with.”

Press Releases-remote-and-virtual-services-during-pandemic - NYC.gov.
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dfta/news-reports/press-releases/pr-remote-and-virtual-services-during-pandemic.page>. (accessed March 22, 2022).

“DFTA Revamps Its Programs to a System of Remote and Virtual Services to Reach Older New Yorkers in Their Homes During Pandemic.”

NEW YORK (April 30, 2020) – To keep older New Yorkers safe, healthy and engaged during citywide shutdown, the New York City Department for the Aging’s (DFTA) network of providers have transitioned many of the services provided at centers, to services that are accessible at home. In the last month, remote and virtual services have included more than 450,000 wellness check-ins, senior centers offering virtual workshops and virtual fitness programs, and the service of nearly 1,000 volunteers who are socially connecting with older adults through phone calls and video chats, the agency announced.

“Thanks to our network of providers and partners, we’ve accomplished, in short order, to deliver support and assistance to older New Yorkers during this pandemic, but our efforts will not stop here. New Yorkers, including our older adult population, are incredibly resilient. We will continue to work with our new and existing partners until we have overcome this pandemic and our seniors can return to their daily, active lives,” said **DFTA Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez**.

Older New Yorkers are one of the groups most vulnerable to COVID-19. On March 16th, DFTA followed City guidance and temporarily closed nearly 300 congregate centers, satellites, and social clubs across the city to help limit the spread of the virus. Prior to the pandemic, these centers had served as hubs of social activity, daily congregate meals (which are now being delivered through the City's **Emergency Food Home Delivery program**), essential support, and community for more than 25,000 older New Yorkers.

DFTA and its partners worked to quickly transition many of the services that older New Yorkers came to rely on at centers, to services that could be accessible at home. Since the City shutdown, staff from congregate centers have regularly been conducting wellness check-ins by phone that provide older adults with social engagement, case management care, caregiver and home care monitoring. In the last month, more than 450,000 wellness calls have been done.

Social Isolation is another issue confronting older New Yorkers while they shelter in place. To combat this, DFTA transitioned its Friendly Visiting program, which matches homebound older adults with volunteers who do weekly visits, to a remote program. Prior to COVID-19, more than 850 volunteers were visiting older adults on a regular basis to talk about shared interests and experiences, forming friendships in the process. With recommendations that older New Yorkers stay at home and maintain social distancing, Friendly Visiting volunteers have continued the program by staying connected with older New Yorkers through phone calls and video chats that are done two to three times a week. In

the last month, new volunteers have signed up for the program, bringing the volunteer total to nearly 1,000 volunteers and helping serve more older adults than before.

ZOOM MEETINGS/DIAL-IN'S

“Joining a Zoom Meeting by Phone,” *Zoom Support*.

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362663-Joining-a-Zoom-meeting-by-phone>
(accessed January 22, 2022).

“You can join a Zoom meeting or webinar, which allows you to dial in to a virtual Meeting without a computer.”

You can join a Zoom meeting or webinar, which allows you to dial in to a virtual meeting without a computer. This is useful when:

- you do not have a microphone or speaker on your computer
- you do not have a iOS or Android smartphone
- you cannot connect to a network for video and VoIP (computer audio)

How to join a meeting or webinar by phone only

- Dial an in-country number. If you dial a toll number, your carrier rates will apply. You can find the numbers on your meeting invitation or view a [full list of international dial-in numbers](#).
- You will be prompted to enter the meeting ID - the nine (9), ten (10), or eleven (11) digit ID provided to you by the host, followed by #.
- If the meeting has not already started and join before host is not enabled, you will be prompted to enter the host key to start the meeting, or to press # to wait if you are participant.
- You will be prompted to enter your unique participant ID. This only applies if you have joined on the computer or mobile device or are a panelist in a webinar. Press # to skip.
- You may be prompted to enter the meeting passcode, followed by #. This passcode will be included in the meeting invite provided by the host.

If you join by computer or mobile device later, you can enter the Participant ID to bind your phone and device session together and show your video when you speak on the phone. To enter your participant ID once you are in the meeting, enter **#Participant ID#** on your phone.

ONLINE SAFETY TIPS

“The Senior’s Guide to Online Safety.” *ConnectSafely*. August 25, 2021.
<https://www.connectsafely.org/seniors-guide-to-online-safety/>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

*“Full Guide/Download PDF One Page Quick Guide Senior Safety Slide show
Most American seniors are now online. As of 2018, nearly 66% of Americans.”*

Most American seniors are now online. As of 2018, nearly 66% of Americans over 65 were Internet users, according to a Pew Research Center survey. That number is getting bigger all the time, and for good reason. The Internet is a great way to read the latest news, stay in touch with family, get medical information and manage appointments, renew prescriptions, and access medical records. It’s how many of us shop and bank without leaving our homes. For an increasing number of seniors, it’s a way to stay in the workforce and even launch a new career or business. And some seniors are going online to make new friends and to find romantic partners through online dating.

The reasons seniors go online are as varied as the users themselves and include:

- Participating in social and cultural activities
- Keeping in touch with loved ones
- Meeting new friends or romantic partners
- Online banking, shopping and investing
- Making travel arrangements
- Getting medical advice and information including doctor reports and test results
- Sharing and viewing pictures
- Exploring and sharing political views
- And much more

Like all powerful tools, the Internet and mobile technologies come with some risks. These risks can be managed as long as you follow some basic rules of the road. So, for all the great things we cover in this guide, we also go over some precautions to help keep you safe.

Communicating with friends and family

Whether it’s text, talk, or video, the Internet is a great way to communicate. You may remember spending a lot of money on long distance calls and keeping them as short as possible to keep costs down, but now you can call just about anywhere in the world for free or a couple of cents a minute, and make free video calls with

services like Skype, Apple FaceTime, Google Voice and Facebook Messenger. For better or worse, old-fashioned letters have been largely (but not completely) replaced by email. And thanks to social networking services like Facebook, it's easier than ever to keep up with your friends and family, and let them keep up with you. Social media allows you to exchange ideas, photos and videos, and even plan events with friends and family living far away. But don't think that social networking is just for young people. A 2014 study found that 56% of online seniors use Facebook, and that's just one of the major social networking services.

Stay safe tips

Use strong and unique passwords and never share your passwords with anyone, unless you've designated someone you trust to manage your accounts. One reason for this precaution is to prevent someone from using your account to impersonate you — perhaps asking your friends and family to “help you out” by wiring “you” money in an “emergency,” which is a common scam.

Make sure your passwords are long — at least eight characters — and include numbers, upper and lowercase letters and symbols; avoid using names or dictionary words. At ConnectSafely.org/passwords, you'll find tips and information on how to use multi-factor authentication and fingerprint recognition for more advanced security.

Use privacy settings. Most services have settings that let you control who can see what you post. Facebook, for example, has extensive controls, letting you post to only friends, your friends and their friends, or everyone on Facebook. You can also limit specific posts to a smaller group like only family members or specific people. Some services give you a choice between private and public posts, with private going just to people you designate. Before posting to any service, it's good to get to know its privacy policies and settings. There are also **privacy settings for smartphones** that can restrict who has access to your location, contacts, and other personal information.

Think before your post. Whether it's a picture, video, or comment, what you post and what you share is a reflection on you. Make sure you feel good about being associated with anything you say online and be sure not to post anything that you wouldn't want to share with the world. Even if you're using privacy settings to limit the audience, there is always a chance that what you post can be copied and shared by others.

Dealing with “spam” or unsolicited email can be challenging. It's pretty common to be plagued by junk email. Simply getting these messages isn't necessarily dangerous, but it can be annoying. In some cases they can be from companies you've interacted with in the past and, if they are legitimate companies, there is probably a link to a page where you can safely ask to be removed from their list. But if they are truly “spammers,” they won't stop, even if

you ask them to. The best thing to do is make sure you're using whatever spam filter is provided by your email service. Visit ConnectSafely.org/seniors for information on how to use the spam filters on popular Web-based email services like **Gmail, Yahoo Mail, Comcast, Outlook** and **AOL**. Avoid clicking on links in unsolicited email, as there is a chance they could link to sites designed to scam people or infect computers with malicious software.

Report abuse from anyone, including friends, family and caregivers. We hear a lot about children being “cyberbullied,” but it also happens to adults, including seniors. If you are getting messages on social media or in email that are threatening, mean, extremely angry, accusatory or in any way abusive, don't respond; reach out for help and support from someone you trust or from adult protective services or law enforcement, and report the behavior to the site or service. All major social media companies, and online and mobile service providers have employees that respond to abuse complaints. ConnectSafely has links to **abuse and privacy pages** for major social networking and Internet and mobile service companies.

Scams!

Fraudsters use the Internet to scam unsuspecting consumers. If an offer, email, or message sounds too good to be true or just seems plain fishy, go with your gut and do some additional checking. Here's a roundup of common scams:

Personal emergency scam: Scammers email or post social media messages that appear to be from someone you know saying they are in distress, such as having their wallet stolen or having been arrested. If you get such a message, find another way to verify if it's true, such as reaching out directly to the person. If you get such a message from a friend, there is a good chance that their account was hacked and that it's a criminal who is out to steal your money.

You owe money scam: Be wary of emails that claim you owe money. If you hear from a bill collector or a government agency about money “owed” by you or a family member, don't respond unless you are certain it's legitimate. It's pretty common for scammers to send “bills” to people who don't actually owe them money.

Online dating scam: Many people have found love via dating websites, but others have been scammed out of money by online con artists. For tips on safe online dating and a list of red flags, see “Meeting new friends and romantic partners.”

Infected computer scam: You might get a call from “Microsoft,” saying your computer is infected or vulnerable to hacking, with an offer to fix it for you. Hang up. Microsoft and other reputable companies never make these calls. These are criminals trying to steal your money and plant viruses on your machine. Also be

suspicious of any messages in email or that pop-up on your computer, in your Web browser or on a mobile app warning you of a virus or a security risk. If you have reason to suspect that your device is at risk, consult a trusted expert but never download software or apps that you aren't certain come from legitimate sources.

Speak out and don't be ashamed if you're victimized. Criminals are very good at what they do and there have been lots of very smart people who have been victimized online. If it happens to you, report it to a trusted person and, if appropriate, law enforcement. Even if you let your guard down, it's not your fault if something bad happened to you.

Saltzman, Marc. "5 Ways to Protect Your Data and Privacy on Your Devices." *AARP*. <https://www.aarp.org/home-family/personal-technology/info-2021/protect-your-devices.html>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

"Here are a few easy ways to you can protect your device from cybercriminals and prevent your data from being stolen on your smartphone, laptops and more."

During the pandemic, we've grown even more dependent on our devices to stay in touch, get work done and remain entertained.

We're shopping and banking online; viewing and sharing recipes; and getting news pushed to our phones, tablets, laptops and smart speakers. But with the increased reliance on tech comes a greater risk of being tracked, analyzed, marketed to or **even scammed**.

Whether your internet service provider, a search engine or social media giants are blatantly mining your data or cybercriminals are out to defraud you through **computer viruses**, **phishing scams** or **ransomware**, your privacy, security and sanity are at stake.

The good news is you don't need to be Bill Gates to fight back. Consider these simple ways to stop cyber-snoopers in their tracks.

1. Use a VPN

Many of us choose the "private" or "incognito" mode when opening a web browser because it deletes your history and **trackable cookies** after your surfing session. But be aware your online activity is still visible *during* your time online. This information can be tracked, saved and shared or sold to third parties.

While private browsing prevents information from being automatically stored on your device, everything you do is still visible to your internet service provider. Websites you visit can see your IP address, which gives them your approximate geographical whereabouts, and identifies your device.

Instead, install a reputable **virtual private network** (VPN), which provides anonymity when browsing online. Popular VPN options include ExpressVPN and NordVPN.

An up-to-date security suite should also help you keep away from prying eyes.

2. Create strong passwords, pass phrases

Remember to have a strong password for all your accounts. Make it at least seven characters long and a combination of letters, numbers and symbols. You'll get bonus points for adding upper and lowercase letters.

Never use the same password for all your online activity. If a site or app is breached, then the bad guys have access to all your accounts. **Password manager apps** aren't a bad idea.

A pass phrase instead of a password is a good way to lengthen your passwords and give you a memory aid. Myd0gD#1! Is derived from “my dog Duke is No. 1.”

For online banking and shopping apps, opt for **two-factor authentication**. It not only requires your password to log in but also a one-time code sent to your mobile device to prove it's really you.

3. Mute, unmute your smart speaker

While **smart speakers** are convenient for their instant responses to your queries, these digital assistants are always listening for their wake word — “Alexa” for Amazon Echo devices or “OK, Google” for the Google Nest or Google Home family. That means your virtual assistant is always listening.

If you don't feel comfortable with this fact, press the **Mute** button on top of the smart speaker or smart display. That turns the microphone off, so the device can't listen for its wake word. You can enable it whenever you have a request, so you'll have to be within arm's length when you want to use it.

While anonymized, also know your requests and commands are stored on each company's servers after you say them, which helps these companies gather data and improve services. You can delete the information any time:

For Alexa devices, log into your app on a smartphone or tablet and select **Settings | Alexa Privacy | Review Voice History**.

For Google devices, go to history.google.com. Click on the **Settings** icon, which looks like three stacked lines and also is called a “hamburger” icon, at the top left of the page.

Go to **Voice & Audio Activity** and select a recording to delete.

4. Disable sharing to Facebook

The world's biggest social network doesn't have the best reputation for privacy and transparency. But to the company's credit, it released a tool last year for you to manage how your activity is tracked.

Called **Off-Facebook Activity**, this tool gives you a summary of activity that businesses and organizations share with Facebook about your interactions, such as visiting their apps, games, or websites (often when you log in with your Facebook ID), and lets you turn off that tracking.

To review your off-Facebook activity:

Log into Facebook.

Tap the hamburger icon or down arrow at the top right, depending on your device

Tap **Settings & Privacy | Settings | Your Facebook Information | Off-Facebook Activity**. Facebook says you will see a summary of your activity that Facebook receives, but it may take a few days for recent activity to show up.

To turn off this tracking, tap or click where it says **Manage Your Off-Facebook Activity**. You can also select **Clear History** and **More Options** to download your information or manage future activity.

5. Don't forget about your webcam

We're now accustomed to using Zoom and other apps for video chats, so be sure to take precautions to avoid having your camera compromised.

If you use an external webcam, one that plugs into your computer's USB port, connect it only when you need it.

If your camera is built into your laptop, pick up a lens cover, which may be available at your local dollar store or is as low as \$3 for 2 on Amazon. For a camera built flush into your screen, use a double layer of tape to block the tiny lens, but don't leave it on forever because it could gum up.

If an app tries to access your camera, some cybersecurity software solutions, such as ESET, have webcam detection.

If you need your computer repaired, take it to a trustworthy source. An ill-intentioned technician could secretly install spyware on your laptop.

If you want to control which apps use your computer's webcam, go to the **Appleicon** on Macs | **System Preferences | Security & Privacy |**

the **Privacy** tab | **Camera** or, on a Windows machine, type **Settings** in the search box at the lower left corner of the screen and type **Camera privacy settings** to see which of your apps has access to your camera. You can click a toggle switch to turn off access to a particular app.

Village, Discovery. "Internet Safety Tips for Seniors." *Discovery Village*. January 25, 2021. <https://www.discoveryvillages.com/senior-living-blog/internet-safety-tips-for-seniors/>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

"While seniors enjoy the benefits of technology, it's important for them to practice internet safety. Our senior living community keeps residents safe."

If you are curious about whether seniors the least bit internet savvy, then consider that a **2014 Pew Research Internet** project showed that about six in 10 adults use the Internet and that 56 percent of Adults 65+ use Facebook. The internet is a fantastic place to blow two, three or even four hours during the day or night. And, even though it seems logical to most of us, seniors may not be as familiar with the rules of the road as they should be before hopping on there and taking off. After all, there is so much to see and do along with all the offers presented that the internet may be a little overwhelming for those who were born before the television was invented.

That is why is never too late or too redundant to lay out some of the ways to be careful about surfing in terms of what you should and should not click on, what to trust and so forth. Here are some simple tips (or reminders) about the internet and making it a safe and enjoyable place to visit.

Internet Scams Targeting Seniors

Don't believe everything you see! The internet is notorious for scams from other users and hackers trying to get your information. This is most often done through phishing and malware that tries to trick users into paying for a service that is not needed or grab personal information.

Additionally, email scams targeting seniors are abundant on the internet. Users are enticed with offers, prizes, free merchandise and more simply by clicking on a link and filling out the form that requests personal information, or worse, providing financial information in order to get a large sum of money (remind yourself that you do not have a cousin who is the King of Nigeria).

Easy Tips to Stay Safe on the Internet

For those over 65 years old, the internet is full of fun, excitement, and technology that make day to day life much easier. From catching up with old friends and

classmates to paying bills online, let's face it, the internet opens up a whole new world. To make it worthwhile, here are some easy tips to stay safe on the internet.

Keep Your Private Info Private

If you receive an email or see an ad that asks for private information (address, social security #, credit cards, banking), do not give it out. Trust us when we tell you that if they ask for such sensitive information, they are up to no good and will not give you what they promised you.

Do Not Send Money to a Stranger

A huge email scam that most anyone with an email address has received is a letter that tells the recipient they will receive millions of dollars (the amount varies) if they send requested information. The supposed pot of gold comes from various sources including your long lost cousin in Africa or some other far off place, someone who is trying to get the money and will give you the crux of it if you send them your bank account # and a host of others who are dying to give you millions. But the money does not exist and neither will any money in your bank account if you believe this scam.

Double-check Facebook Private Messages from Friends

If you receive a private message from someone you know on Facebook that says they are in a jail in Europe and need you to send them bail money, stop and think if that person is even in a foreign country much less jail especially if it is a relative. A good idea is to call them and find out where they are then let them know they have been hacked.

Don't Click Because It Tells You to Do So

Be careful about what you click on because if you click on the wrong thing, you can run into a host of problems from getting malware in your computer to the entire thing freezing or even crashing.

Use Anti-Virus Software

Be sure to use anti-virus software to help block malware and other viruses from getting into your system. There are several reputable ones including McAfee, Kaspersky, Webroot, and Norton that constantly stay up to date on the latest problems. Once installed, set up a schedule to scan your entire computer and allow updates so that your computer is as protected as possible. Anti-virus software even blocks you from viewing suspicious websites which is an added benefit.

Use a Secure Wi-Fi Network

When installing internet access, make sure you use a secure Wi-Fi network at home with a strong encryption for you to enable. Also, have a strong password and change it periodically.

Verify Sites

For ecommerce, retail and banking sites, verify the sites before using them then only enter any financial information (i.e. credit cards) if the web address has an “https” at the beginning as well as a padlock on the address bar.

Constant Reminders of Internet Safety

Internet usage among seniors is only increasing so it makes sense to constantly remind them that it is a great tool but one to be used carefully. The best thing to remember is to keep your business to yourself if a random request pops up.

“Common Online Scams Targeting Seniors - Tips to Protect You from Online Scams -, n.d.” <https://consumer-champion.org/resources/common-scams-targeting-seniors/>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

“When searching for the best cyber security course online, the selection can be overwhelming, so we’ve created a ranked list of the best course online.”

Millions of the senior citizens fall for online swindles each year according to some reports, over **thirty six billion dollars** is lost every year to online con artists.

Senior citizens represent a unique demographic that is both trustful and compassionate. The scammers are aware of these characteristics and they are trying to exploit them.

The marketplace has become very complex and most senior citizens don’t have the sufficient time to keep up with the latest technology coming out of Silicon Valley every other day.

Due to this, they are more likely to miss important things like latest security upgrades or the latest technology trends and even new fraud schemes. This makes them susceptible to these frauds and scams.

In this article, we will discuss several factors about online scams targeting senior citizens. We will also look at the best way you can avoid these scams and the best way to protect yourself from them.

Types of Online Scams

Relationship Scams

This is one of easiest scams con artist carry out successfully. A person will get your contacts online and profess their undying love for you.

Most senior citizens are lonely hence, the company and a chance to be loved again is usually very tempting. The relationship may involve meeting in person or never at all. After a while, the 'lover' will start asking for money to solve a few personal problems. Before you know it, the 'lover' will swindle money from the senior citizen for non-existent bills.

Charity scams

A con artist will contact you pretending to be from a charity organization soliciting for funds. The senior citizens thinking that they are assisting in a noble course will wire money to a phony account only to realize the charity organization does not exist.

Non-existent Credit Card Offers

Credit card fraud remains the most prevalent form of online fraud. You may have been smarter in your youthful years but as you age. Your money handling capacity falls.

A report done by **Brookings Institution** found that the peak age for adults when it comes to money handling averaged 53 years.

After that, you are on a download spiral. Credit card fraudsters are tech-savvy and smart lot. For this reason, it can be a challenge to keep up if you are a senior citizen. Unless you were an IT expert during your productive days, you are an easy prey.

Usually, the scam comes in form of an offer too good to ignore such as credit card advancement with very high approved limit. The catch is that you have to pay an advancement fee. This is the scam. Other times, you will be required to give out your personal information.

Email Phishing

According to the FTC, the main example of phishing occurs when a senior citizen receives an email in form of an advert or services from a reputable company. The email will ask you to download something or may atomically download a malware when opened.

The malware can access your computer remotely and search through personal information like tax returns, bank accounts and social security number.

Online Vacation Scams

After working for many years, most senior citizens look forward to enjoying their retirement by vacationing. Internet con artists are aware of this and use free vacation offers to lure senior citizens into conning traps.

The good deal turns out to be a non-existent vacationing property or not the standard you expected. In extreme circumstances, a senior citizen pays an amount for a chance to win the vacation.

Better Business Bureau is an organization that gives tips on how to avoid this specific type of online scam.

Lottery and Winning Scams

When you see a large beaming advert pop up on your screen claiming you have won some prize as a random winner, which is a scam. Other websites will promise a prize if you help them hit certain goals.

The main aim of these emails is usually to get your personal information. They may even email you a check and ask you to fill in your credit card number or bank account to claim your prize.

These are just some of the main online scams that a large number of senior citizens have fallen victim. There are more and you should make a point of doing more research.

How Senior Citizens Can Protect Themselves From Internet Scams

Senior citizens don't need to be frequent victims of online scams.

In her book "Ageing Dangerously", senior citizens' rights activist and Lawyer Marie-Therese Connolly discusses the dangers senior citizens face in regards to the financial con scams and how they can go about the situation.

In 2017, a federal law **Elder Abuse Prevention and Protection Act** was enacted.

Elder Justice Coordinators appointed by the Justice Department deal specifically with prevention and assisting senior victims of various forms of abuse.

According to True Link Financial Study, over 950,000 elderly citizens are victims of internet fraud every year. Another estimated that over thirty billion dollars is lost to these scams.

Tips To Protect You From Online Scams:

- Do not share any sensitive personal information online. Ensure that the website you submit sensitive information like credit card numbers is trustworthy and legit.
- Not everyone who knows a few things about you is trustworthy. Just because someone knows where you stay and your full name, does not mean you have to trust him or her. Carry out due diligence and where there are doubts seek help from authorities.
- Avoid opening emails from unknown sources, especially if they have attachments
- Before donating to charities, confirm if they are legit.
- If you meet a stranger online, let him or her remain a stranger. If it is about social networking do it without involving any financial aspect.
- When using your computer do not click on pop up adverts. Cyber security experts do not show up on your screen; it is you to go for their services.
- Set up your computer to install security updates automatically so that when someone tells you need an upgrade, you know it is a fraud.

Why Do Online Scams Happen To Senior Citizens?

According to their official website, 60% of people who call the National Fraud Information Center are senior citizens. The department of Homeland security further adds that, senior citizen are two times more likely to be defrauded as compared to the rest of the population.

Why Are Senior Citizens More Likely To Be Victims Of Internet Fraud?

They save a lot in recent online survey by consumer insights in America, it was reported that households headed by citizens 60 years or older, save up to 70% of their income.

Fraudsters therefore know that senior citizens are more likely to have cash lying around somewhere. This is why seniors become targets most of the time

- **They use the internet frequently**

A research done by the Pew Research center showed that over 50% of senior citizens use the internet. That was a few years ago and the numbers are steadily rising.

Scammers are also aware of the fact that seniors spend more time online during the day than any other demographics. This makes them a target since they also tend to be online when most scammers are active.

- **They are least likely to report the crime**

When a senior citizen is scammed, he or she is less likely to report the crime to authorities. This is due to a combination of factors. Most senior citizens do not know where to report fraud cases and how to handle these situations.

They may also feel embarrassed. For this reason, many scammers go unpunished hence they are more likely to scam other people.

- **They easily trust strangers**

According to the **FBI**, the senior generation trust strangers easily. This can be attributed to the community environment they grew up in where you knew everyone in the town. Most of the time they believe that the scammers are their neighbors or someone close who is more likely to help them than steal from them.

How Senior Citizens Can Avoid Being Scam Victims?

There are several ways senior citizens can avoid being scammed. Online scams are getting complicated by day. The con artists are becoming smarter and using sophisticated methods.

- Firstly, before making any purchases online consult a caregiver or trusted family members. They will know if the product is genuine or if it is just a scam.
- Never give out any personal information unless you are sure it is to trusted people like your doctor or legit companies you have dealt with before.
- When making purchases or payments use your credit card. This way, you can dispute the payment when you discover it is a scam and have the money refunded.
- Avoid deals that pop up on your computer when you are online. According to the Consumer Insight, you are more likely to get scammed during impulse buying.
- When someone contacts you about having won a lottery you have never participated in, ignore the message. The odds of you winning a lottery are 1 in 175 million. Before you get too excited think about that.
- When someone contacts you about a relative being in trouble, confirm with other family members or close friends.
- Make a point of reporting any suspected fraud cases. You are better off safe than sorry. Report any suspicious cases to relevant authorities like the Federal Trade Center or the **Internet Crime Complaint Center**.
- When using your computer all your software upgrades should come from the company itself and not from a browser pop up window. Set your computer to carry out the upgrades automatically.

- Do not accept any approach from Computer Tech support over the internet. In case of any tech issues, call the company. They will send someone over or advice you on what to do.

“Privacy Tips for Older Adults.” *Stay Safe Online*. <https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/managing-your-privacy/privacy-tips-older-adults/>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

“Stay safe online.”

Tips For Older Adults

Going online lets you keep learning, connect with friends and family and play games. Just as you fasten your seat belt before driving, take precautions before using the internet to be safer and more secure. Take safety measures, think about the consequences of your actions and connect knowing you have taken steps to safeguard yourself when online.

Personal Information Is Like Money. Value It. Protect It.

- **Lock your devices, like your tablet and phone:** You lock the front door to your house, and you should do the same with your devices. Use strong passphrases or passcodes to lock your tablet and phone. Securing your devices keeps prying eyes out and can help protect your information in case your devices are lost or stolen.
- **Think before you act:** Ignore emails or communications that create a sense of urgency and require you to respond to a crisis, such as a problem with your bank account or taxes. This type of message is likely a scam.
- **When in doubt, throw it out:** Clicking on links in emails are often how bad guys get access to personal information. If an email looks weird, even if you know the person who sent it, it's best to delete.
- **Make your passphrase a sentence:** A strong passphrase is a sentence that is at least 12 characters long. Focus on positive sentences or phrases that you like to think about and are easy to remember (for example, “I love country music.”). On many sites, you can even use spaces!
- **Unique account, unique passphrase:** Having separate passphrases for every account helps to thwart cybercriminals. At a minimum, separate your work and personal accounts and make sure that your critical accounts have the strongest passphrases.

- **Write it down and keep it safe:** Everyone can forget a passphrase. Keep a list that's stored in a safe, secure place away from your computer.

Share With Care

- **What you post will last forever:** Be aware that when you post a picture or message online, you may also be inadvertently sharing personal details with strangers about yourself and family members – like where you live.
- **Post only about others as you would like to have them post about you:** The golden rule applies online as well.
- **Own your online presence:** It's OK to limit who can see your information and what you share. Learn about and use privacy and security settings on your favorite websites.

“The Ultimate Internet Safety Guide for Seniors (2022).” *SafetyDetectives*. Last modified October 12, 2021. <https://www.safetydetectives.com/blog/the-ultimate-internet-safety-guide-for-seniors/>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

“Our experts help you watch out for your loved ones in this blog about internet safety for seniors.”

The Ultimate Internet Safety Guide for Seniors (2022)

The internet can be a scary place, especially if you're old enough to be able to remember dialing a rotary telephone! **In 2020, in the US alone, cyber crimes against adults aged 60 and over resulted in approximately \$1 billion in losses — a 30% increase over the losses reported in the previous year.** Of the almost 800,000 complaints of cyber crime reported to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) in 2020, over 200,000 victims were over the age of 60.

Staying safe online can be really overwhelming — most users have their photos, credit cards, personal communications, financial information, and devices exposed to hackers every single day without even knowing that they're in danger. In this article, I'm going to explain the most common online threats facing seniors today, such as:

- **Viruses and malware.**
- **Phishing.**
- **Data breaches/password theft.**
- **Social media scams.**
- **Banking fraud.**

- **Privacy violations.**
- **And more...**

If this list has made you feel nervous (and you're getting ready to unplug all of your devices and go back to your rotary phone), don't worry! **The vast majority of cyber-attacks can be easily prevented with the proper tools, some basic education, and plain old common sense.**

Most seniors don't know the difference between ransomware and a random number generator — which is why the best security software has been designed for even non-tech savvy users. In addition to defining the most dangerous cyber threats (and giving you practical tips to avoid them), **I've personally selected highly secure antivirus programs, password managers, and even virtual private networks (VPNs) that can keep you safe with a minimal amount of setup and that are very easy to use.**

So whether you're looking for the best deals for rotary phones on eBay, trying to figure out why strange Russian girls are trying to sell you Ray-Bans through Facebook Messenger, or you just want to safely keep up with family, friends, and finances online, look no further — **my ultimate internet safety guide for seniors is your one-stop shop for internet security assistance in 2022.**

What Are the Most Common Online Threats Affecting Seniors?

Seniors face pretty much the same risks online as everybody else — hackers have an ever-expanding array of tools to fleece users out of their money, steal user data, destroy devices, and spread dangerous files and scams across the web. Some common online threats affecting seniors are:

- **Malware.** Software designed to damage a computer, steal data, or financially exploit unsuspecting users. Common malware types include ransomware, trojans, and spyware (we will discuss these more **later in the article**).
- **Data breaches.** The release of personal information (such as email addresses, usernames, passwords, and even credit card numbers and social security numbers) to the general public and dark web servers. Recent high-profile data breaches have affected millions of Facebook and LinkedIn users.
- **Scams.** Hackers are constantly coming up with new ways to deceive users into giving away their personal information and money, including scam emails, text messages, websites, social media accounts, and online dating profiles.
- **Identity theft.** Using another person's personal information (e.g. name, social security number, credit card, etc.) without permission.

Fortunately, a lot of these attacks can be prevented with a few simple tips and by following a few simple steps, and I will also show you what to do if you unfortunately fall victim to cybercrime.

How to Best Protect Yourself (& Your Personal Info) Online

Download a good antivirus program. Using good antivirus software is the easiest way to stay safe online. The **top antiviruses on the market** include real-time malware protection to block viruses before they can run, anti-phishing tools to block scam websites, and additional extra features like firewalls, Wi-Fi scanners, VPNs, password managers, software updaters, data breach monitors, and more. **Norton** is my #1 antivirus choice — it's really easy to use and provides a ton of automatic security tools to keep all of your devices safe.

Always go to the source. Hackers use deceptive pop-up windows, email links, text messages, websites, phone calls, and more to try and rush and pressure users into bad decisions. Maybe a legitimate government agency really is texting you, or your utility company sent you an email, or your old friend wants you to download an email attachment. But you should always try to confirm that the information you're getting is authentic by using a trusted contact method like giving that agency, company, and friend a call. Always be skeptical — if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

Only go on secure websites. A website is considered secure if the address starts with “https://” (instead of “http://”). A quick way to check if the website is secure is to look for the padlock icon next to the address bar, which indicates the website you're using has a secure encrypted TLS connection (you can learn more about web encryption and security in our **blog post about man-in-the-middle attacks**). The **HTTPS Everywhere browser extension** is a great free tool to help ensure you're using encrypted web connections whenever possible.

Avoid pirate sites. Downloading (or torrenting) music, movies, and TV shows for free is tempting, but it's best not to use torrenting websites. These websites are generally unsafe and they're always full of malicious links and malware downloads. If you do download pirated content, make sure you're running a **powerful antivirus program with effective real-time malware detection**. It's also good to use a VPN when downloading files — a VPN hides your actual IP and prevents your internet service provider from monitoring your online activity (**ExpressVPN** is my favorite **VPN for torrenting**).

Use a variety of passwords. The best way to keep online accounts safe is to use different and complex passwords for each account. Remembering so many different passwords is difficult, so it's advisable to use a password manager. Read about our favorite password managers **here** — my personal favorites are **1Password** and **RoboForm**.

Keep your system updated. It's important to keep your operating system and programs updated as software developers are constantly patching security vulnerabilities. I recommend you set your computer to automatically install updates when they become available. If you don't keep your device updated, you're at risk of exploit attacks, which is when hackers can take advantage of a known security weakness. You can learn more about exploit attacks.

Don't be afraid to ask for help! Computer running slowly? Weird email? Incredibly cheap products? Strange notifications? Make sure you have a trusted family member or human to speak with. And some antiviruses like **Norton** have a remote access tool, which allows tech support operators to get into your computer and solve problems 24/7.

How to Spot Online Scams

According to the FBI and the National Council on Aging (NCOA), some of the most common online elder fraud scams are:

- **Romance scams.** Criminals pose as interested romantic partners on dating websites or social media, and exploit seniors for money. IC3 **reported** that seniors lost over \$280 million to romance scams alone in 2020.
- **Lottery and charity scams.** Hackers appear to represent legitimate charities, lotteries, or sweepstakes and then convince seniors that they have won a contest or persuade them to make a donation.
- **Tech support scams.** Criminals claim to be tech support and flag a fake computer or mobile device issue. They offer to solve the problem by using a program to take over a device to gain personal information.
- **Grandchild scam.** Criminals pose as grandchildren who ask for financial assistance.
- **Government impersonation scam.** Criminals claim to be government employees and demand payment or personal information regarding taxes, social security, pensions, etc.

Most of the time, online scammers will be very insistent and demand that you act quickly, whether it's giving them access to your device, giving them personal information, or sending them money. It's important that you resist the pressure to act out of urgency and take the time to assess the situation properly. Here's a few techniques you can use to determine if you're communicating with a legitimate person or a scammer:

- **Don't click on links and don't download anything.** If you're even slightly suspicious about the communications you're receiving, don't follow any links or download any files. Unsafe links and files can steal your data, damage your devices, and much more. Good internet security software like **Norton** can block unsafe links and suspicious downloads in real time.

- **Go to the source.** Google the charity, lottery, tech department, or even government office potentially being impersonated. You can usually contact these organizations via phone or email and verify if you're being contacted by a scammer or an honest person.
- **Ask yourself clarifying questions.** Ask yourself, "Why would a tech support person need you to download a file? Or, "How did you win a sweepstake that you never entered in the first place?" By asking yourself these types of questions, it will likely expose whether the message is from a legitimate source or not.
- **Use Google.** Most scammers aren't very creative. There's a good chance the scam being run on you has been used before — copy-paste text from an email, or just type in a few words describing your situation, followed by the word "scam", and see if the same scam has been attempted on other people.

"Tips for Staying Safe and Secure Online." <https://www.aarp.org/home-family/personal-technology/info-2019/privacy-for-seniors.html>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

"Tips for staying safe and secure online."

Strategies for Staying Safe and Secure Online

Tips and advice excerpted from AARP's new book 'My Online Privacy for Seniors'

Crossing the street at a busy intersection might be scary, but if you look both ways and follow traffic signals, chances are you'll get to the opposite side of the street safely. To accomplish this, you follow basic rules to avoid oncoming traffic. Not a big deal, right? Well, you should apply the same caution when using the internet.

AARP's new book *My Online Privacy for Seniors* offers simple steps to protect your safety and **privacy**, whether you are on your computer, phone, tablet or smart devices.

Here are 9 tips excerpted from the book on how to help you navigate our ever-changing connected world.

Safely surf the internet

One key way websites and online services collect and use information about you, the web surfer, is by using cookies. A cookie is a tiny file that's transferred to your computer from a website you visit. To quickly determine whether the web

browser you're using is set up to allow cookies, **visit this website**. Each web browser has a different process for turning on/off or adjusting its cookie-related features.

Protect your security when working with emails

If your computer is **connected to the internet via Wi-Fi**, a vulnerability exists when your computer wirelessly sends information through your home internet router or modem, or through a public Wi-Fi hotspot. To prevent this, consider installing a virtual private network (VPN) that'll work in conjunction with your web browser to encrypt all information as it leaves your computer or mobile device.

Remember online security basics

Some of the most commonly used **passwords** should never be used. These include the word "password," your name, your child's name, your spouse's name, your pet's name, your birthdate, your anniversary date, your phone number, the letters "abcdefgh," the number sequence "12345678," the number sequence "87654321," the number sequence "1111111," the phrase "letmein," the word "football," the phrase "iloveyou," or anything along these lines. (For example, using the password "22222222" is just as bad as using "11111111.") Using any of these passwords can compromise your online security.

Protect your privacy and security when shopping online

Whenever you visit an online merchant, check the website address (URL) that's displayed in the web browser's Search/Website Address field. If your intent is to shop on Target's website, and the first portion of the website URL does not say, "https://www.target.com," you have likely somehow been redirected to a spoof (fake) website that's designed to look like the Target.com website. If you suspect this to be the case, close the browser window and manually type in the website address you want to visit in a new browser window.

Looking for more on online security? **Boost your tech skills with AARP's Learn@50+**

Handle online banking securely

It's **safer to use a credit card** than a debit card when shopping online. If you use a major credit card and there's a problem with your purchase or the merchant, you can call the credit card issuer, which will intercede on your behalf. You don't pay the money while a dispute is being investigated and you aren't immediately out of

the money. Your liability is limited, usually to \$50, and most credit card companies waive that amount.

Use social media wisely

When choosing which photo of yourself to use as your profile picture with your **social media** account, some online security experts recommend you avoid using a headshot where you're looking directly into the camera — in other words, a photo that's similar to the type of photo found within your passport or on your driver's license. A cybercriminal could potentially use this type of profile photo to create fake identification should they attempt to steal your identity.

Safeguard privacy when sharing photos online

Social media sites — such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat — and many of the online-based photography-related services — including Flickr.com — allow you to publish one or more photos at a time and share them with the public.

If you're on a trip and taking amazing photos of landmarks and tourist attractions, you may not want to share these types of photos with the public — just certain people. You don't want to let the public know you are out of town.

Store data, documents and files in the cloud

There are two different kinds of storage: local and remote. Local storage refers to your computer's internal hard drive or your mobile device's internal storage, as well as any external hard drives or flash drives that are physically connected to your computer or linked via a Bluetooth wireless connection. Your content is stored locally and does not require the internet to access it. When something is stored remotely in the cloud, it's stored online, on a server potentially located away from your computer. Accessing remotely stored content requires an internet connection.

Customize the security settings on your smartphone or tablet

Newer iPhone and iPad models that do not have a Home button have a camera located on the front of the device that is able to scan your face and identify you when you simply look at the screen.

If you want your iPhone or iPad to be able to identify additional people, from the Face ID & Passcode submenu in Settings, tap the ***Set Up An Alternate Appearance*** option. Follow the onscreen prompts to scan and store the additional faces. Alternatively, you can share your device's passcode with other people to give them access to your mobile device, but do this only if you completely trust that other person.

YOUTUBE “HOW-TO” VIDEOS

Automate Your Life. *Smart Home Technology For Elderly Care | Products and Usage*, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eIGjF2T2MJQ>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

“Tell me you don't know someone who's getting up there in age and could use some extra help around the home. I doubt you can, and I think most of us do. My belief is that home automation and smart home products can be a big benefit for your parents, your family, your friends, and anyone who's needing extra help. Today, I'm going to give you a #smart #home design for the #elderly.”

Mittler Senior Technology. *How to Teach Seniors Technology | 5 Tips | Prod.* February 16, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q13M7MOpJLA>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

“We are very excited to present Mittler Senior Technology's 5 tips to guide you in teaching seniors technology! If you are a member of the younger generation, this video was made for YOU! Help your grandparents adjust to the new world of technology.”

FREE ONLINE TECHNOLOGY CLASSES (FOR OLDER ADULTS)

“7 Best Cyber Security Courses Online for Beginners in 2022.” *Comparitech*, May 6, 2019. <https://www.comparitech.com/blog/information-security/cybersecurity-course-online/>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

“When searching for the best cyber security course online, the selection can be overwhelming, so we've created a ranked list of the best courses online.”

Looking to secure your company's digital assets or considering a career in cybersecurity? We reveal the best online cybersecurity courses for beginners to help get you started.

Cybersecurity is a growing issue for businesses and individuals alike, and the demand for training in the field is on the rise. Would you like to tighten up your cybersecurity measures at home or at work? Or perhaps you're an employer

wanting to step up your business's security measures and educate your employees on the topic. Maybe you're **considering a career in cybersecurity** and are looking to get started. An online cybersecurity course for beginners can help.

Whatever your reasons for wanting to delve deeper into the world of cybersecurity, there is sure to be an online course that's right for you. Teaching tools vary greatly in terms of accessibility, scope, suitability for various levels of competence, and of course, price.

There are a ton of options to choose from, such that the selection process can become overwhelming. That's why we've put together a list of the top seven online cybersecurity courses out there. Before we get into the details here's an at-a-glance list of the best cybersecurity course available online.

Best Cyber Security Courses Online:

1. **StationX VIP Membership**: Gives you unlimited access to a huge range of cyber security courses including ethical hacking, penetration testing, and much more. Caters for all levels and great value for money.
2. **Coursera Introduction to Cyber Security Specialization**: Covers 4 entry-level courses to help you on your way to a career in cyber security.
3. **SANS Cyber Aces Online**: Courses cover security fundamentals around networking, operating systems, and system admin.
4. **edX Essentials of Cybersecurity**: Good option for those looking for a university accredited course.
5. **Heimdal Cyber Security for Beginners**: A course geared more towards the general user who wants to increase their understanding of cyber security.
6. **Cybrary Introduction to IT and Cybersecurity**: Covers network engineering, system administration, forensics, and penetration testing.
7. **Harvard Cybersecurity: Managing Risk in the Information Age**: Cyber security course covering attack types, risks, and mitigation strategies alongside compliance and legal issues. Not cheap at £2,800.

We based our course selections on the following criteria:

- Offers value for money
- Doesn't require much, if any, previous knowledge of cybersecurity
- Offers practical advice that can be applied at home or to your business or cybersecurity career
- Operates entirely online with no travel required
- Provides you with some type of certification upon completion

Best cyber security course online for beginners

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Best cyber security course online for beginners

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1. StationX VIP Membership

StationX offers almost 100 courses related to cybersecurity, including those teaching ethical hacking, penetration testing, networking, security coding, digital forensics, and incident response. It even has courses centered on passing top security certifications and preparing for examinations.

The StationX VIP Membership gives you unlimited access to all courses, many of which have racked up thousands of great reviews. Considering each course normally costs \$90–\$2,000 by itself, **the discounted fee of \$149** (usually \$1,199) per year for access to all courses is well worth it. You can stream and download lectures and access them from mobile or desktop. You'll **learn at your own speed** and receive a certificate of completion for each course.

For beginners, we suggest starting with *The Complete Cyber Security Course!* Which includes four volumes with classes taught by cybersecurity expert and StationX CEO, Nathan House. These are the modules in this course:

- **Hackers Exposed:** Learn to stop hackers, block tracking, and prevent government surveillance.
- **Network Security:** Find out about network security, wifi security and hackers, firewalls, password managers, and more.
- **Anonymous Browsing:** Discover the world of anonymous browsing including hiding IP addresses, Tor, and **VPNs**.
- **End Point Protection:** Learn about antivirus software, malware, encryption, and application control.

Once you're through that, you can continue browsing and see what captures your interest next. By purchasing the membership, you have continued access to new training courses that are being added all the time. Courses are presented by top security experts, so you know you're getting the best of the best training.

All-in-all, this is a training toolbox that can serve you well as you embark on a career in the industry. Since it's updated regularly, you can use it to stay on top of advances in cybersecurity and propel yourself further in your career.

Even if you're not pursuing a career in the field, this might still be a good fit. Because you can tailor your learning, this membership is suitable for someone looking to take control of cybersecurity within their own company, or even someone who is simply interested in learning more about the field.

BEST CYBERSECURITY COURSES: StationX is our #1 choice for beginners. StationX VIP Membership provides unlimited access to all content including courses focused on passing top security certifications.

2. Coursera Introduction to Cyber Security Specialization

The way Coursera works is it presents multiple courses as part of a specialization. You can take all courses within a specialization or choose specific ones. Each specialization includes a hands-on project which you'll have to complete in order to earn a certificate.

The Introduction to Cyber Security specialization includes four courses:

- **Introduction to Cyber Attacks:** Provides a basic understanding of threats and vulnerabilities, and an overview of how cyberattacks are carried out.
- **Cyber Attack Countermeasures:** Teaches the basics of cyber defense and cryptography, including authentication solutions and public-key cryptography.
- **Real-Time Cyber Threat Detection and Mitigation:** Discusses real-time cybersecurity techniques and how to detect and prevent common attacks.
- **Enterprise and Infrastructure Security:** Introduces more advanced topics such as enterprise compliance frameworks and issues in blockchain and mobile security.

This set of courses goes beyond the basics, so is less suitable for home users looking to boost their cybersecurity knowledge and more for business owners or would-be cybersecurity professionals. The suggested time frame is **nine hours per week for two months**.

You can take many individual Coursera courses for free. However, to complete a specialization and its corresponding hands-on project to get a certificate, you'll have to pay a monthly fee. Specializations come with a seven-day free trial after which they cost between \$39 and \$79 per month for each specialization. This means the quicker you get through the courses and projects, the less you have to pay.

Once you're finished with this specialization, there are other related ones you can undertake, such as **Cybersecurity for Business** and **Applied Cryptography**.

3. Cyber Aces Online

SANS Cyber Aces Online courses are offered for free by the SANS Institute, which you've no doubt heard of if you're in any way interested in cybersecurity. This organization is highly regarded in the field of information security and has been conducting research and education programs for three decades.

The institute runs in-person training events across the globe, but these typically cost thousands of dollars a pop. As such, to get some free online training from these guys is a treat. That being said, the current offerings are limited with just one course being available. But if you're just looking for a taster, it could be ideal.

The course teaches the fundamentals of cybersecurity, covering the following:

- **Operating Systems:** Focusing on command line usage, this module teaches concepts and commands in Linux and advanced use of Windows.
- **Networking:** This covers the fundamentals of computer attacks and corresponding defense from a network point of view. You'll find out about the protocols used in each **OSI layer**, in particular, the networking layer.
- **System Administration:** The final module teaches administrative functions in popular scripting environments.

You can opt to take courses with or without quizzes, which are presented in a multiple-choice format and test knowledge and understanding of each module.

This course is geared toward a prospective cybersecurity professional or members of the general public. The SANS Institute hopes that by offering courses like this for free, people will be better educated on cybersecurity, and it will ultimately “help strengthen the security of our nation.”

4. edX Essentials of Cybersecurity

edX is a great resource for accredited university courses. These courses are designed by various universities themselves and come with verified certificates. However, they do come at a cost. The Professional Certificate in Essentials of Cybersecurity is offered by the University of Washington (UWashingtonX) and costs \$716.40 (usually \$796).

The suggested duration for the whole program (which includes four introductory courses) is 2–5 hours per week for 6 months.

Included courses are:

- **Introduction to Cybersecurity:** Answers questions about and provides literacy in the field of cybersecurity.
- **Cybersecurity: The CISO's View:** Delves into cybersecurity operations and in particular what a Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) does within a company.
- **Building a Cybersecurity Toolkit:** Teaches the skills needed to become a cybersecurity professional.
- **Finding Your Cybersecurity Career Path:** Discusses the various career paths you could follow and helps you decide which the right fit is for you.

Each course separately costs \$199 so you save around \$80 by buying the bundle. As you can see, the flow of this program is tailored to someone who is thinking of pursuing a career in the cybersecurity field.

Once you've completed this one, if you're looking for something more advanced, the **MicroMasters® Program in Cybersecurity** might be of interest. It's fairly pricey at \$1,436, but the length and scope of this course are no doubt worth it. It's run by the highly-regarded Rochester Institute of Technology and is aimed at learners looking to launch their cybersecurity career.

5. Heimdal Cyber Security for Beginners

Heimdal Security is a reputable firm providing technologies and intelligence in the fight against cybercrime. This organization is offering its handy Cyber Security for Beginners course free of charge. While many of the courses on this list are aimed at prospective cybersecurity professionals, this one is **targeted more toward a general user** looking to bump up their home cybersecurity.

This course is paced for you as lessons are delivered to your inbox every two days. Over the course of 20 lessons, you'll learn:

- Cybersecurity basics such as vocabulary and setting up a security system
- Tools and tactics that can shield you from malware
- How to make your system less vulnerable to cyber threats
- Ways to keep your kids and other loved ones safe online
- How to explore the web safely (including email and social media)
- Security skills such as knowledge of how attacks work and how to avoid and deal with them

A few example lesson titles are “No more technical gibberish! Master basic security terms in 20 minutes,” “Share. Tweet. Protect. Repeat. – social media, the safe way,” and “What your kids & parents need to learn about cyber security.” You can see that this really is geared toward the home user and will be less relevant for someone looking to pursue a career in cybersecurity.

6. Cybrary Introduction to IT and Cybersecurity

If you're debating a career in cybersecurity and thinking about which route to take, this course could be a good fit for you. Designed to help you make a decision between the main areas of cybersecurity, it covers four of the primary disciplines in a modular format than spans just over four hours' worth of videos.

You'll learn about system administration, network engineering, incident response and forensics, and penetration testing.

Many Cybrary courses are free and if you like this course, there are **plenty more to choose from**. You can search their library based on course type and difficulty level. All courses are presented in video format, so are great for visual learners.

Note that once you're in, there's a fairly aggressive upsell to the Pro version of Cybrary which gives you access to additional courses and other perks such as career pathway guidance and a mentor. This costs \$39 per month, which is pricey, but if you're interested in any of the additional features (like certification prep), you might find this worthwhile.

7. Harvard Cybersecurity: Managing Risk in the Information Age

This Harvard course is split up into eight modules to be tackled over as many weeks. It should involve an estimated 8–11 hours per week. By the end of this course, you'll be able to develop a cyber risk mitigation strategy for your business or that of a client. You'll also have knowledge of the **legal and compliance processes** that accompany cyberattacks.

You'll learn about the various types of cyberattacks threatening businesses and which systems are at the highest risk of attack, as well as the importance of a holistic approach to cybersecurity. Modules include *Identifying the threats of an organization* (module 2), *Understanding your technology* (module 5), and *Cyber risk and the law* (module 6), among others.

Upon completion of this course, you'll walk away with a certification for Advances in Learning from Harvard University's Office of the Vice President. As expected, a course of this caliber does come with a hefty price tag. Currently, you'll need to pay \$2,900 to register. If you're not on a tight budget, this piece of paper might be worth it, but for many, it's simply inaccessible.

Why take a cybersecurity course?

Cybercrime is a growing problem that's becoming an inherent part of our everyday lives. Almost everyone now uses the web in some way, shape, or form at home, at work, and on the go. Even the relatively few who shy away from technology still have to deal with companies for which cybercrime is a real potential threat.

As such, it has become more of a basic requirement for people to make themselves aware of the risks that are out there and what they can do to protect themselves. Here are the three main reasons for taking a cybersecurity course:

- **To protect yourself and your family.** It's easy to plead ignorance and say that we should leave things to the experts, but think of it this way: we leave it to the police to catch thieves, but that doesn't mean we make a habit of leaving our front doors unlocked or leaving our keys in the car.

The fight against cybercrime needs to be a group effort, and educating yourself on threats and how to mitigate them is a great place to start.

- **To protect your business.** Businesses, large and small, are at risk of falling behind when it comes to cybersecurity. All too often business-owners only decide to step up their game when it's too late and they've already suffered losses. DDoS attacks, data breaches, phishing schemes, and more can trigger major monetary losses and a lot of stress. Taking a cybersecurity course can help you be proactive in beefing up your business' cybersecurity before it's too late.
- **To pursue a cybersecurity career.** If you're passionate about cybersecurity and think you'd like to pursue a career in the field, you're in luck.
- It's predicted that by 2025, there will be 3.5 million cybersecurity job openings. This industry is expected to grow from \$175 billion in 2015 to \$1.75 trillion in 2025. Taking a cybersecurity course for beginners can help you decide if this really is your calling, and if so, which discipline you'd like to specialize in. E-learning courses are low cost, and with suitable qualifications can open up the potential to a high-paid career in cybersecurity.

“Cybersecurity Bootcamp.” *NYU School of Professional Studies*. Last modified October 21, 2021. <https://digitalskills.sps.nyu.edu/lp/cybersecurity-bootcamp-free-minicourse/>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

“Cybersecurity boot camp at NYU. Learn information security in order to start your path to a cyber security career. Join our course today!”

Why Cybersecurity?

Whether you want to change careers, upskill, or you're looking for practical experience, our boot camp can help you achieve your career goals.

High Demand

As industries innovate and certain jobs become obsolete, the tech workforce gap continues to grow, offering professionals skyrocketing opportunities in cybersecurity.

Diverse Career Paths

The cybersecurity field is brimming with variety and allows people of all interests and backgrounds to pursue a career path that fulfills them.

Competitive Salary

The large workforce gap results in hefty competition among employers to attract top talent, meaning organizations pay more for skilled cybersecurity professionals, including entry-level positions.

Everything You Need to Cybersecure Your Future!

At the NYU School of Professional Studies Cybersecurity Bootcamp, your success is our purpose. The program is curated to ensure learners of all backgrounds complete the program with the skills and knowledge necessary to go from student to professional in less than a year. No previous experience is required.

“Harvard’s VPAL Cybersecurity Online Short Course | GetSmarter.” *Presentations*.
<https://harvardx-onlinecourses.getsmarter.com/presentations/lp/harvard-cybersecurity-online-short-course/> (accessed January 22, 2022).

“Learn how to protect your business from cyberattacks with Harvard's VPAL Cybersecurity online short course.”

You'll Walk Away With:

- **The ability to draft, strategize and develop a cyber risk mitigation strategy, including the appropriate legal and compliance steps that need to be taken when responding to cyberattacks and reporting cyberattacks to law enforcement.**
- **An in-depth understanding of the different types of cyberattacks, the business systems that are most at risk, and the importance of an organization-wide approach to cybersecurity.**
- **A premier certificate from Harvard University’s Office of the Vice Provost for Advances in Learning, in association with HarvardX, as validation of your newfound cybersecurity knowledge and skills, as well as access to a global network of likeminded cybersecurity professionals.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE WEBSITES FOR OLDER ADULTS

“Is Social Media Good or Bad for Seniors? | CANES Community Care.”
<https://www.canes.on.ca/blog/social-media-good-or-bad-seniors>. (accessed January 22, 2022).

“Is Social Media Good or Bad for seniors?”

Overall, social media seems to have a positive effect on seniors’ well-being. Internet use has been shown to reduce seniors’ risk of depression by nearly 33%. One study found that seniors who use Facebook show marked improvements in cognitive function.

Another study found similar results when seniors were trained to use email, Skype, Zoom and Facebook.

Social media can open new avenues for seniors separated from children and grandchildren by long distances or physical distancing.

Facebook makes it easy to keep in touch with family members. Over the past year, video-calling has become very popular with seniors, who use services like Skype and Zoom to connect with their grandchildren.

Social Media Helps Keep the Family Together

Facebook is particularly useful for connecting with loved ones. It makes more frequent conversations possible and can really help close generation gaps.

1. PHOTOS

Shared photos allow seniors to see their grandchildren change and grow, and creates closeness and involvement.

2. VIDEO CHATS

Video chats also are a great way to communicate in “real-time” and Facebook messenger can accommodate not only live chat but video too.

Social media can really connect family members separated by distance or because of COVID-19 and social distancing recommendations.

The Health Benefits of Social Media

Believe it or not, social media can open up a door for seniors to enjoy some key health benefits.

1. It can reduce loneliness, isolation and depression symptoms. Seniors who actively participate in social media regularly report better moods. Keeping in touch with family and friends and being active in their lives goes a long way to combat depression.
2. A recent study by the American Psychological Association found that seniors who use social media are more likely to participate in activities that lead to better health overall.
3. With so much information at their fingertips, many seniors can take the opportunity to do research and get better educated on matters concerning their health. This makes them more likely to engage in healthy eating, staying physically active, and finding ways to make daily activities easier and more efficient.
4. There are many types of groups on Facebook seniors can join. They can find others with the same interests (knitting, cooking, etc.) or others who have the same health concerns (Stroke, diabetes, etc.). These groups offer ideas and support and are a great way to feel a part of a community.
5. Seniors who regularly use social media can perform well intellectually. Since social media helps to satisfy social needs, it becomes a mental stimulant, Keeping one's mental health generally in check.

Opportunity to Keep Learning

The social media landscape is an ever-changing one with something new to learn every day. This can be fun for curious seniors who want to stay up to date on the trends their families are following.

Joining groups of people who are active in an area of interest can keep seniors learning and sharing their knowledge of topics they're interested in.

Some Precautions Should be Taken

As we can see there are some really important benefits for seniors using social media, but as we know there are some downsides to social media we all need to look out for.

1. Fraud

Did you know fraud is one of the most committed crimes in the world? Fraud is widespread even among social media users. Seniors are often the target for fraudsters and hackers and seniors need to be aware to be on the lookout. The scam artists use a variety of programs, techniques, and

devices to propagate fraud on older adults. See our blog on Fraud Prevention <https://www.canes.on.ca/blog/fraud-prevention>.

2. Privacy

Over the years issues around privacy has been talked about and criticized. Though social media platforms such as Facebook has made some changes to how they handle privacy they could be doing more to protect their users. They offer many privacy settings to protect the users however it takes some digging to find and change these and it may be something seniors don't even consider or know they have control over. If you have an elderly loved one who enjoys using social media perhaps you can help them adjust their privacy settings to ensure their privacy is protected.

3. Harassment and Bullying

This is another unfortunate impact of social media on seniors. Crimes such as these befall unknowing senior citizens and are usually carried out by ruthless youngsters posting mean comments about the seniors. The youngsters or trolls attempt to show the seniors that they are beyond the social media age and that they do not belong there. These forms of bullying disturb the old ones and affect them psychologically.

Let your loved ones know that they can report these comments and reassure them that of course, they belong on social media it's for everyone!

4. Misinformation (aka Fake News)

Unfortunately, this one is an ongoing problem and some of the things shared can be scary or cruel or just downright wrong. Seniors should be reminded that just because someone they know and love shared something on social media doesn't mean it's true.

It's always important to check the facts and question anything that seem like it's a little fishy or farfetched.

It's important to share your knowledge of social media to make sure your senior loved ones know which scams and traps to watch out for and make sure to check in regularly to ensure they aren't unknowingly connecting with people they shouldn't be.

Social media can be a great tool for seniors and opens up a whole new way to connect with friends, family and the larger community. By encouraging our loved ones to get online, we can expand their worlds and ensure we stay connected. Be sure to follow our social channels for important tips and news from CANES Community Care.

“The Internet for Seniors and the Spectacular Psychological Benefits.” *Life Enriching Communities*, November 25, 2021. <https://lec.org/blog/the-internet-for-seniors-and-the-spectacular-psychological-benefits/> (accessed January 22, 2022).

“There are many benefits of the internet for seniors, though some of them are surprisingly psychological. Learn more today!”

While puzzles and diet are renowned as ways for you to stay sharp as you age, according to a **recent study**, the internet also helps seniors psychologically. This study found that seniors who used the internet regularly in retirement scored substantially higher on cognitive tests.

Benefits of the Internet for Seniors

What is the Challenge?

One of the greatest challenges to seniors living on their own is the problem of isolation and loneliness. With nearly 27% of seniors living by themselves, social isolation is both common and dangerous. Although living alone doesn’t inevitably lead to loneliness, the two often go hand in hand. In fact, as of June 2020, **56% of older adults reported feeling isolated**. That’s more than double the number of seniors reporting feelings of isolation in 2018.

Why is the Internet Good for Seniors?

We will be upfront, **science** still doesn’t completely understand this connection. However, the prevailing theory is that it has to do with access to social networks. Through the internet and specifically social media, seniors are more engaged with people when they are online regularly. This is essential because many seniors may have difficulty meeting people in person and the internet gives seniors the freedom to be social without leaving their homes.

Loneliness and social isolation are major problems for seniors, especially after the events of 2020. Loneliness increases the risk of developing depression and negative health concerns. However, seniors who use the internet regularly were linked with a notable reduction in their rate of cognitive decline. The association being more pronounced among women. On average, retirees who used the internet regularly could recall more words on a cognitive test.

Successful Aging

Successful aging means maintaining an independent, positive, healthy, and meaningful quality of life. This is a constant challenge for seniors, yet essential for overall wellness. Cognitive function and social engagement combined with physical function are the three primary components of successful aging.

Socialization provides opportunities for seniors to deal with stress, receive social support, and connect with peers.

Research suggests that social engagement may be more important to seniors than physical health as loneliness and isolation can affect physical health. Research finds socializing is associated with lower levels of anxiety and depression.

Since the internet is a great way for those suffering from debilitating mobility issues to connect with others, it is a vital tool for the psychological wellness of older adults. Yahoo Messenger and Skype are the two most popular free chat services that seniors take advantage of.

Video conferencing is preferred. It enables them to see and talk to their friends and family. Facebook is the most popular social networking platform. From here seniors share photos, chat online, play games, and search for long-lost friends. In this way, the internet helps promote psychological well-being in seniors.

Looking for another way to help alleviate the stress of isolation? Learn what your decisions are with our FREE eBook, **Moving to a Senior Living Community: Make Decisions Your Way**.

“Why Is Social Media Use So Important for Seniors?” *Easy Tech Seniors*. Last modified April 26, 2019. <https://www.easytechseniors.com/social-media-as-an-essential-tool-for-seniors/> (accessed January 22, 2022).

“Technology made simple to help seniors in their day-to-day life. New gadgets for elderly people, smart devices helping aging

Why Is Social Media Use So Important for Seniors?

There’s no doubt that social media usage took the world by a storm as the number of users has dramatically grown over the recent years. Even so, over the past year, there has been a surge in the number of older users who are especially enthusiastic to embrace the upcoming networking tools.

A couple of years ago, social networking domains were predominantly characterized by teenagers and youngsters. But now, new trends in the advancements of social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have extended reach to even the older members in the society.

The perceived positive impact of social media on seniors is perhaps the major cause of this trend. Nonetheless, not all seniors are on board with social media

usage. Most of them, anxious about the eventual challenges faced by some of those already using these platforms.

The evidence of research shows that there is a steady growth in the number of seniors who sign up for social media services. This new trend is global and not just in the United States. The ability for internet usage through mobile devices has certainly accelerated this phenomenon.

Although the older generations have not necessarily invested much in activities such as vlogging and blogging, the usage of social media networks such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook is very heavy by seniors.

Social Media Use Among Senior Citizens

To better understand the use of social media, it's crucial to examine some of the features that are persistent across the various types of online media.

One characteristic of social media is the ability for all users to participate, as everyone can give feedback and make their contributions regarding ongoing matters. This way, the ambiguity of the media audience is reduced, people can collaborate in conversations. Through social media, communication is quick and effective and communities can share in general interests such as sports or work and travel. Finally, there is increasing connectivity as links to various sites, resources and contacts are easily shareable.

We can define the senior citizens as those who are past the middle age, most likely above 60 years of age. In the communal sense, old people are better off with help from others in their daily activities.

For a long time now, and with good reason, it has been presumed that only the young found the need to use social media in their day to day lives. However, new trends indicate that older people as well progressively keep on being computer-literate. Besides that, the elderly in technology continue developing into regular internet users. As seen above, the promise of social media bringing people together applies even for older people.

Most of the credit should perhaps go to the families and friends who have inspired the elderly to find the use of social media. These circles of the elderly and their families and friends find benefit from using social media.

As the elderly may be sometimes alone in senior care or while their families are away working, social media has been able to keep them connected and enable them to check up on each other, such as through Facebook. In addition, it is amazing that the lives of senior citizens have transformed as they can find information regarding any diseases, disabilities or impairments when they are on their own.

The internet has played a crucial role in helping seniors stay home more. Not that they do not like to socialize, but older people are simply less mobile compared to the younger generations. Social networking presents a huge opportunity for the elderly to better make use of their energy while relaxed.

As a result of these new trends, businesses are taking advantage to conduct branding and expand their networking due to this boom in the elderly in technology. The use of technology allows the population of seniors to better access treatment and medicine, as businesses can now reach them through social media networks such as Facebook to deliver medicine. This even allows them to live healthier and longer.

Why is Social Media Use So Important for Seniors?

Social Media acts as a gathering place, where people of all generations connect and communicate based on mutual interests. Although pop culture can misinterpret the adoption of social media platforms by seniors, more of the elderly in technology continue to learn to use sites such as Instagram, Twitter, Skype, and Facebook. In recent times, more seniors use social media on the daily compared to those that read the daily newspaper.

Research shows that the demographic of 65-year-olds and more experiences rapid growth in social media usage. New trends estimate that more than 35% of people in this age group use social media sites. Moreover, this number is growing, and predictions show that by 2020, there will be more than 50 million seniors on social media platforms.

The Biggest Advantages of Social Media for Seniors

1. Staying connected

Through social media, everyone is able to stay in touch with their friends and families. The loved ones might be anywhere across the country or the globe, but the elderly in technology, they are only a few clicks away. Using video chatting utilities such as Skype lets the seniors see their family members and share their lives. Through Instagram and other picture sharing platforms, for example, one can see a collection of their grandchildren, children or old friends.

Social media remarkably streamlines communication among people, as instantaneous chats and video calls can get one seamlessly connected to others.

Although most seniors rely on emails as a primary means of contacting families, colleagues, and friends, there is an increased number of older people incorporating the use of social media for their daily communications. Just like other age groups, social media for seniors majorly involves sharing links, videos, photos, and status updates, while the number of contacts grows.

2. Taking advantage of health benefits

Social media for seniors opens up a door for enjoying key health benefits. For one, it can reduce loneliness, isolation and depression symptoms. As senior adults will start facing mobility challenges, moving out of the house to visit and spend time with family and other loved ones can be tough.

Nonetheless, senior adults regularly using social media can perform well intellectually, with improved health. Since social media helps to satisfy primary social needs, it acts as a mental stimulant, which keeps one's mental health generally in check.

3. Bridging the inter-generational gap

The younger generations might well assume that the older ones have a hard time when using technology. This stereotype continually fails to stand, as older generations make an effort to get deeper involved with technology.

Social media gives people common grounds to hold conversations on, starting with viral current occurrences and funny videos. This is a significant impact of social media on seniors as they can also find out and maybe catch up with the kinds of entertainment such as movies and music that are popular among the younger generations.

4. Sparks interests

This is similar to the previous point. However, social media, in this case, tailors your feeds according to your interests and topics that you enjoy, including traveling, health, sports, cooking and so on. Pinterest is a great example of this, as people will share links of new ideas that might spark the interest of the seniors. A social media page or a blog for any possible subject probably exists. Seniors can even use forums to discuss lifetime experiences, which is a timeless platform.

The options of research are so wide since all sorts of materials are available on the internet and sharable through social networks. Even the retired senior citizens need to gather information, after all, the eldest people are usually the wisest. They can always find useful information, and even use social media connections to seek for more through social media, they can ask questions and get to learn based on their curiosity. Questions can range from personal to business oriented. Through a site such as LinkedIn, their questions can get answered by the online community.

5. Getting news

Besides getting information about what seniors want, social media for seniors acts as a great news source. Twitter allows one to keep up with local events, a feature that can be very useful for anyone of any age group. A quick search is enough to show new trends as well as popular articles. The important issues happening around you and the globe never get past you.

6. Starting a Business

Senior citizens and retirees also have great business ideas. A senior might need to sell things or even conduct training lessons. One might even be a freelance consultant owing to their many years of experience. Although the seniors are retired, it does not mean that they wouldn't have any input for organizations.

However, they might not get hired based on their age. The elderly in technology can leverage social media and productivity tools and start their own business. The voluminous population on the social media network can be a market basis, while tools such as Facebook ads can enable them to reach target markets.

Eventual disadvantages for seniors using social media

Clearly, social media platforms have a lot of benefits to offer for older adults. If there are downsides, what are they?

1. Internet addictions

One negative impact of social media on seniors is the development of internet addiction. In a real sense, it would be a problem for seniors to stay secluded indoors only. Some people have been found to engage in online activities that even cause divorce. From the family point of view, internet addictions pose a major problem. Even though the probability of reaching out to others increases, it is still important to be able to connect with people within the community.

Through excessive shutting of oneself indoors and preferring to be online on Twitter and Facebook to increase the number of followers and stir up conversations, a senior might lose the value of the physical world nearby. It would be better if the seniors could associate in the communal get-togethers as well.

The essence of physical activity cannot be undermined, as even the older and less mobile need to move about to maintain normal health. Internet addictions pose the threat of cutting these opportunities to be physically active as one stays glued to their screens.

2. Fraud

This is one of the most committed crimes globally. Even among social media users, fraud is widespread. As for the majority of the elderly in technology, the concept of staying secure from fraudsters and hackers is not deep-rooted. This exposes them to fall victims of scammers on social media. The older people are sometimes helpless and easy to victimize. The scam artists use a variety of programs, techniques, and devices to propagate fraud on these poor old folk.

This calls for the seniors to remain conscious and safeguard their private information. Victims of online fraud may suffer mental unrest, stress-related problems, and other psychological issues. They may fall into financial losses by being lured to give up the cash.

3. Privacy

The use of social media for seniors comes with the concern of the exposure of private information on these platforms. Some might not be aware of the dangers of submitting some of their private information on social media sites. As some are ignorant about the privacy and licensing conditions on many sites, they may give access to malicious people their personal information. This may make them cybercrime victims in certain incidences.

4. Harassment and Bullying on social media

This is another unfortunate impact of social media on seniors. Crimes such as these befall unknowing senior citizens and are usually carried out by ruthless youngsters posting mean comments about the seniors. The youngsters attempt to show the seniors that they are beyond the social media age and that they do not belong there. These forms of bullying disturb the old ones and affect them psychologically.

The Bottom Line

Social media is no longer a thing for the youth, as more and more senior citizens keep getting on board.

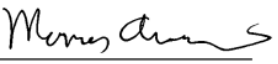
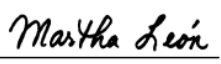


Perhaps the advantages of using social media are what draws the majority of the seniors to this wave. They can enjoy the benefits of research, more efficient communication, and even bridge the gap between them and the younger generations. However, being exposed to fraud, as well as cyberbullying remain as some of the challenges that seniors might face when participating in the online community.

To enjoy the full benefits that social media provides for the elderly, one must remain wary of the associated downsides. This way, the seniors can have enriched daily routines as well.

NOTES:

- *Strongly suggested: Conduct quarterly updates of technological resources for older adults.*
- *Listed below is information retrieved from the company websites.*
- *Each item includes the URL (address of the web page) associated with each resource.*
- *The citations related to the “Amalgamated Resources: Websites” list are part of the inventory.*

**APPENDIX L:
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE**

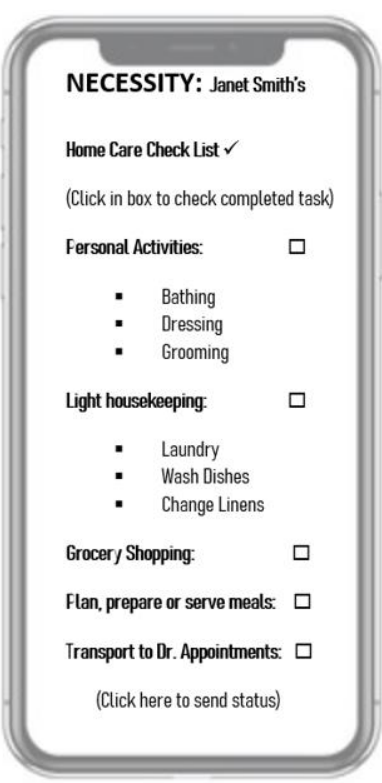
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 80%;">AMERICAN MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION</div> <p style="text-align: center;">is proud to award</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;"><i>Jenice Jeter</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">the following educational credits in recognition of the successful completion of</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Moving Ahead: Breaking Behavior Patterns That Hold You Back</p> <p style="text-align: center;">September 13-14, 2021</p> <table style="width: 100%;"><tr><td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">8 Professional Effectiveness (PMU) 4 Relationship Management (PMU)</td><td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">1.2 Continuing Education Units (CEU) 12 Continuous Learning Points (CLP)</td></tr></table> <p style="text-align: center;">Instructional Method: Live Online</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 20px;"><div style="text-align: center;"> <small>AMA President and Chief Executive Officer</small></div><div style="text-align: center;"> <small>Certification Officer</small></div></div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 20px;"><div style="text-align: center;"> <small>American Management Association® 1601 Broadway, New York, NY 10019</small></div><div style="text-align: center; font-size: 0.8em;"><small>The American Management Association is a not-for-profit educational organization incorporated by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York.</small></div><div style="text-align: center;"></div></div>		8 Professional Effectiveness (PMU) 4 Relationship Management (PMU)	1.2 Continuing Education Units (CEU) 12 Continuous Learning Points (CLP)
8 Professional Effectiveness (PMU) 4 Relationship Management (PMU)	1.2 Continuing Education Units (CEU) 12 Continuous Learning Points (CLP)		

APPENDIX M:
NECESSITY MOBILE APP PROTOTYPE

SCREEN #1



SCREEN #2



SCREEN # 3







NECESSITY: Janet Smith's

Home Care Check List ✓

(Click in box to check completed task)

Personal Activities: ☐

- Bathing
- Dressing
- Grooming

Light housekeeping: ☐

- Laundry
- Wash Dishes
- Change Linens

Grocery Shopping: ☐

Plan, prepare or serve meals: ☐

Transport to Dr. Appointments: ☐

(Click here to send status)

NECESSITY: MOBILE APP PROTOTYPE - SCREEN # 3 AMPLIFIED



**APPENDIX N:
NEW CATEGORY TO DEFINE OLDER ADULTS**

<u>AGE RANGE</u>	<u>CATEGORY</u>
65 to 74 years of age	The Bronze Age
75 to 84 years of age	The Silver Age
85 to 84 years of age	The Golden Age
95 + years of age	The Platinum Age

Bronze:

Bronze has long been prized for its preciousness, endurance, and ability to register fine details and reflect light. It is strong and durable.¹¹⁵

Silver:

Silver is a precious metal that symbolizes riches and wealth—believed to be a mirror of the soul.¹¹⁶

Golden:

Gold adds richness and warmth to everything that it comes in contact with. At the highest level it is associated with higher ideals, wisdom, understanding, and enlightenment. It inspires knowledge, spirituality, and a deep understanding of ourselves and our souls.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ The Beauty Zone, “Selections from the Hood Museum of Art” *Hood Museum*, entry posted March 18, 2014, <https://hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu/explore/exhibitions/beauty-bronze> (accessed March 29, 2022).

¹¹⁶ Jennifer Bourn, “Color Meaning: Meaning of The Color Silver” *Bourn Creative*, entry posted October 30, 2010, <https://www.bourncreative.com/meaning-of-the-color-silver/> (accessed March 29, 2022).

¹¹⁷ Bojan Lisiak, “Gold Color Meaning” About Colors, entry posted 2018, <https://www.about-colors.com/gold-color-meaning/> (accessed March 29, 2022).

Platinum:

Platinum is a noble metal, one of the strongest, and one of the longest-lasting - its eternal strength and beauty will endure for generations to come.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Platinum, “Pure, Rare, Eternal” Platinum Jewelry, entry posted 2012, <https://platinumjewelry.com/why-platinum/eternal/> (accessed March 29, 2022).

APPENDIX O:
SERMON: “BE STRONG AND WORK”

REVEREND, CARLETON J. GILES

Sunday, October 24, 2021

Union Baptist Church of Stamford

Interim Pastor: Reverend Carleton J. Giles

SCRIPTURE:

“Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? And how do we see it now? It is not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; And be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; And be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: For I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts: According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, So my spirit remaineth among you: fear yet not. For thus saith the LORD of hosts; yet once, it is a while, And I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; And I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: And in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts. (Hag. 2:3-9 KJV).¹¹⁹ The word of God for the people of God Thanks be to God. You may be seated in His presence.”

SERMON TITLE:

¹¹⁹ The King James Version is used for this sermon

“BE STRONG AND WORK”

THE MESSAGE:

“Be strong, says the Lord, and work for I am with you. I want to just lift right from verse four, the subject be strong and work.”

PRAYER:

“Consecrate me now to thy service Lord by the power of Grace divine. Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope my will be lost in Thine. In Jesus Name, Amen.”

THE MESSAGE (CONT'D):

“I did not want to get in the crosshairs of these seminarians, so some people pronounce the name of this book Hag-gē-ī and some Ha-gī, that’s not what this sermon is about this morning. You may choose your /own pronunciation. Did I say that right, Dr.?”

Be strong and work. These words were uttered more than 250 years go, and yet they come to us in our own day with a pertinence that is almost startling. It is not surprising because the time in which we live seems to have much in common with those of the old Hebrew prophets. Therefore, these prophetic writings that we find are powerful in the conditions that they address in the principles that they recognize and in the appeals that they make. So, from this ancient writing in the book of Haggai, we take out these words and find that they are living and powerful coming to us not faint and far, from that bygone time where he stands but rather with an immediacy that gives us to feel that they are really the word of the Lord to us.

‘But now be strong all ye people of land declares the Lord and work: For I am with you,’ declares the Lord almighty. This is really where we stand in our own world. And, in our nation, in our city, and yes, in our church. As the air has taken on that

familiar and distinct New England flavor and the work here at Union proceeds in God's own timetable with a new commitment, we work out our own soul salvation with fear and trembling, determined to recommit ourselves to the work of ministry and the church and as Nehemiah writes, 'come let us rebuild the wall, and they said, let's start building.' So, they committed themselves to the common good hear me now. In the book of Ezra, we have the account of the laying of the stones of the second temple. Then a decree from the king forbidding the work for 15 years, the house of God lay waste with that almost appalling aspect of desolation, not so much of a structured, battered and bruised and beaten but rather of a structure started and never finished. At the death of a king this proclamation loses its authority, but the people did not proceed with the building urging difficulty and danger and poverty as the reasons. Yet, to watch this all the while neither danger nor difficulty nor poverty prevented them from building their own houses. And houses of beauty and luxury at that. To such a people, the message of Haggai comes, and this brief prophecy of only two chapters tells the story of how He delivered these prophecies in conjunction with Zechariah and how the people arose and built the house of the Lord. In the text, three things are found:

- There is a need to rebuild
- And strengthen
- And to renew the house of God.

The responsibility of the people is to be strong and work. And the encouragement for them and for us, by the way as we do any work in the kingdom of God is the promise of the covenant, and that is that God says, 'I am with you!'

The house of God has been neglected; we can imagine people saying, why to build the house, why not wait, why not leave the building to our children and the question is answered by the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah one supreme answer was given to all such question. It was the answer of the final and fundamental fact of all human life, and that is, the fact of God. That is the underlying truth that makes necessary the building of the house of God in their day and the renewing of ourselves in this day; it is a fact of God:

- God is the age-abiding fact.
- The ever and everywhere present fact, and when we forget God, we are leaving out of our calculations the supreme quantity and therefore whatever we find is faulted and doomed and wrong.
- The one fact from which there is no escape beloved is the fact of God.
- God is not distant from human life in Him we live and move and have our being.
- He is our light and our salvation.
- He is a refuge in time of trouble.
- He is the God of the infinitely small as well as the infinitely great. Not alienated from any part of human life.
- He knows our downsitting and our uprising and our going out and our coming in. Near to us in the casual as well as the critical. Numbering the hairs on our heads.

Mamma used to say, He is a doctor in the sick room, a lawyer in the courtroom.

The songwriter said, He is a way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper, light in darkness; that's who He is. He is the supreme fact of life and the fact from which there is no escape. Where, shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whether shall I flee from Thy presence.

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there
shall your hand lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

How foolish it is for us to leave God out of the calculation. Whatever we do,
Union, whatever we do Union, whatever we're doing Union, don't leave God out. God is
at work in us to do His goodwill and pleasure. Don't leave God out. We are all to
continue the great work of our church. After 133 years, don't leave God out. Being
confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you, will perform it
until the day of Jesus Christ. Don't leave God out because God is the final and
fundamental fact in human life. He is the supreme obligation.

In the days in which Haggai exercised his ministry, the building of the house was
entirely material. The house was the true rallying point for the people of God of Worship.
In this place, they gathered together to seek the presence of God and remember and
recognize His power and reminded their hearts anew of the abiding fact of His covenant
with them and His perpetual care of them. But, today, the house of God is no longer
simply material.

What a recent reminder we have all just received; rather, it is a living spirit - the
church of God, the church of God, which is the house of the living God. Body of baptized
believers living temple of living suppose whose eyes are toward the light whose sickness
is illuminated with joy. Who, while we are living in the midst of sorrow and desolation of
time, have found mastery over sorrow and desolation in our fellowship with the unseen
and the eternal? It is a lot of theology, but all it means is to hold to God's unchanging
hand.

That is the true church that is the whole church that is the function of the church. All things divide us cease to be, and we realize that the building of the church of God is of supreme importance, the strengthening of the people of God in order that there may be maintained in the midst of sorrow and sin of humanity a living testimony to the holiness of God when we live in right relationship with Him. Be strong and work!

Nothing can be more important than the building of the church of God. The building of its stone upon stone, but more importantly, living stones brought into touch with Thee, a stone whose impact is impressed upon us and we bear witness, and our glad and pure and consenting lives to what the kingdom of God really means. Be strong and work.

The people look back to the days when these things were there, and up their glory, and they held the presence and disapproval both as to its condition and as the idea that it was possible to restore the lost glory. And doesn't that sound familiar. We still have a carelessness in our day in which says 'it ain't time yet.' But the time has come as it was in the days of Nehemiah.

Now is the time for us to rebuild our congregation. We've been through something. We've been through something. But, now is the time to restore the church of God:

- For a long time, we weren't able to come together in corporate worship.
- We had to gather around the kitchen table – in what grandma used to call our house shoes and watch church online.
- But now it is time for revival.
- And now it's time for us to come back to church.

- We've learned now how to wear our mask.
- And we have gotten our vaccination. In fact, I am ready for my booster right now.
- It's time for us to come on back. Be strong and work. And it will not take just one of us. It is not going to take just a few of us.
- But it is going to take all of us as part of our togetherness as a community of faith.
- We need everybody to put their hands to the plow and not look back.

I'm so glad that the Lord called me into His service. I am glad He called you to be a Christian, and more than that, I'm so glad I'm saved, and now I'm recommitting myself to be strong and work. The Lord has need of workers to till his field today. So kindly, He has led me to walk in the wisdom's way. I pray for Grace to help me and all my heart to say, 'Oh, bless the Savior, you can count on me! Count on me!

Be strong Union, be strong Union and work! For the night is coming. Work while it's day. Work! The doors of the church are open."¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Union Baptist Church of Stamford, "Sunday Worship Service – (10-24-2021)," Union Baptist Church Stamford, CT, October 24, 2021, YouTube video, 1:11:32. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivskQfvMSv8>.

APPENDIX P:
ACP, JR.: NYTS FELLOWS - ANTHOLOGY/WEBINARS

“PROTEST, PANDEMIC, POLITICS: ESSAYS ON ADAM CLAYTON POWELL, JR. ”

By The Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Fellows Cohort
(Studied at New York Theological Seminary)

Ch13: Jenice Jeter

ESSAY: Unapologetically Relevant: The Impact of Older Adult Congregant Volunteers

The social activism strategies used by Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. are the continuation of Adam Clayton Powell Senior's legacy, which began at The Abyssinian Baptist Church from a functionalist perspective by challenging the hegemonic institutions to protect senior citizens, as well. These senior citizens include older adult congregant volunteers. As with the social activism displayed by Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., today's COVID-19 pandemic forces present yet another need for change. Older adults face challenges on a greater scale than other disparaged groups.

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. protected the marginalized senior citizens in a relevant way. Not only was he a forceful representative of Harlem's 22nd District, but Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. was also an unapologetic representative. He knew the impact of every dedicated volunteer—which included older adult congregants. We must continue the legacy of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. by incorporating social action initiatives on behalf of our seniors. If Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. were alive today, he would likely insist that we as a community not allow seniors to fall behind.

In the early 20th century, Abyssinian and its members suffered economic and social challenges resulting from rampant discrimination and increased housing and employment competition from a growing European immigrant population. While contending with local

segregationist laws, the church faced foreclosure courts.¹²¹ It is these undeniable facts that impact the deprecated older adult congregants the most. Nevertheless, these types of challenges prompted Adam Clayton Powell Sr., Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., and each successor to unashamedly acknowledge the critical role of every viable, reliable, and valuable senior citizen.

The impact of older adult congregant volunteers played a significant part in Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.'s legacy. His sheer genius and fearlessness, bold defiance meeting bold determination, resulted in the birth of unwavering support from older adult congregant volunteers. These senior adults, though frail in nature, became an unapologetically relevant force, supplying back-support. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. had some of the most trustworthy, appreciative, and committed senior volunteers.

Becoming the eighteenth pastor of a mainly conservative congregation in Harlem did not cause Powell, Jr. to moderate his debonair lifestyle. If anything, he became more determined to live life on his terms while using his church platform to champion his social action agenda.¹²² Today is no different. We live in a tech-savvy world, and statistics show that only nine percent of seniors age 75 or over are comfortable with technology basics primarily due to age-related motor-skill decline. These metrics would not discourage Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. from championing on behalf of older adults.

Therefore, our responsibility is to continue the legacy as technology evolves by creating new-age technology programs and initiatives designed specifically for seniors to support and change the narrative of what older adults cannot do, turning their frailty into

¹²¹ Louisa Winchell, "Beyond the Village and Back: Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church," <https://www.villagepreservation.org/2020/02/20/beyond-the-village-and-back-harlems-abyssinian-baptist-church/> (accessed November 30, 2020).

¹²² Ibid.

endless possibilities.

If Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. were alive today, he would say, "Our seniors are critical to the work that God called us all to do. Every part of the body of Christ is relevant. Technology provides older adults with another tool to showcase their relevance to the cause; let us teach them and provide them with the technological tools they need to keep the faith, too!"

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. NYTS Doctor of Ministry Fellows Presents:

“Protest, Pandemic, Politics”

Date: Sunday, November 22, 2020

Special Guests: Adam Clayton IV, Bishop Johnny Ray Youngblood.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL JR.
NYTS DOCTOR OF MINISTRY FELLOWS

Presents

PROTEST PANDEMIC POLITICS

Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 4PM

*Join us for our conversation as we memorialize one of
the greatest political figures of the 20th century.*

Rev. Adam Clayton Powell Jr.
"Keep The Faith Baby!"

SPECIAL GUESTS:
Adam Clayton Powell IV
Bishop Johnny Ray Youngblood

RSVP FOR THE WEBINAR
<http://evite.me/zNbprQ3FbT>

*11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the
conviction of things not seen. -Hebrews 11:1*

ACP Jr. Webinar

Sunday, November 22, 2020

4 pm

Panelist Copy

(Run of show)

Panelists: Please enter the webinar at 3:45pm

Business casual attire is suggested

Be mindful of your camera angle and background

- 4:00pm Webinar begins. The webinar is being hosted by Dana Owens and Debra Northern. A slide will be shown at the start of the webinar indicating the webinar is in memory of Powell Cohort George Grant. Opening remarks will be given and Debra will share the purpose of the webinar and introduce the Powell Cohort panelists.
- 4:05pm Debra will introduce President Walrond for remarks.
- 4:10pm Anne Williams-Isom will introduce Rev. Dr. C. Vernon Mason for remarks.
- 4:15pm Wendy J. Kelly-Carter will introduce Adam Clayton Powell IV for remarks.
- 4:25pm Tyrone Stevenson introduces Bishop Johnny Ray Youngblood. Bishop Youngblood will reflect on the life of Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and share why Adam's message is important for us today.
- 4:40pm The Powell Anthology is introduced and the format for the rest of the of the webinar will be explained.
- 4:45pm Group I is introduced. The discussion will focus on the following: What does Adam's contributions as a political figure mean for us today?

Debra will moderate the 15 minute discussion

Panelists:

Rondee Gaines: *We Have the Right to Breathe, Breath and Life: The Everyday Lives of Black Folks Power During the 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic*

Tyrone Stevenson: *Strange Fruit, Strange Times, Same Message*

Sherrylyn Womble: *If Adam Clayton Powell Were Here Today*

5:00pm

Group II is introduced. The discussion will focus on the following: What causes would Adam be involved in had he lived to see the year 2020?

Dana will moderate the 15 minute discussion

Panelists:

Wendy J. Kelly-Carter: *P.P.E. – Powell-Elaine*

Anne Williams-Isom: *The Need for Prophetic Leadership in 2020: Lessons from Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.*

Hiram Ratliff: *The Powell Amendment to Reduce Gun Violence – 2020*

5:15pm

Group III is introduced. The discussion will focus on the following: What were some of the challenges Adam faced and how did he overcome them?

Debra will moderate the 15 minute discussion

Panelists:

Jenice Jeter: *Unapologetically Relevant: The Impact of Old Adult Congregant Volunteers*

Derrick S. Johnson, Sr.: *The First Bad Nigger In Congress*

Caiphia C. Rolle: *Social Racism In Medical Care or just Capitalistic Greed*

5:30pm

J.J. Youngblood will give a recap of the webinar, thank viewers as well as panelists and offer closing remarks.

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. NYTS Doctor of Ministry Fellows Presents:


“Keeping the Faith/Pastoring and Leading Through the Pandemic”

Date: Sunday, November 21, 2021

Special Guests: Bishop Johnny Ray Youngblood.



Fireside Chat Program (Run-of-Show)



FIRESIDE CHAT PROGRAM	
3:00 PM	Opening with Music
3:10 PM	Prayer Rev. Maria Felix Pastor with NYC Presbytery (NY)
3:15 PM	Welcome, Purpose & ACP, Jr. Cohort Introduction Rev. Dr. Wendy Kelly-Carter Associate Pastor, Mount Olivet Baptist Church (Harlem, NY)
3:20 PM	Introduction of Fireside Chat Host & Guest Speaker
3:25 PM	Rev. Dr. JJ Youngblood Senior Pastor, MLK, Jr. Memorial Baptist Church (Renton, WA)
4:25 PM	Fireside Chat Rev. Dr. Debra Northern (Host) Min. of Membership, Care & Parish Life The Riverside Church (NY, NY)
	Bishop Johny Ray Youngblood Senior Pastor Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church (Brooklyn, NY)
4:35 PM	Q & A (Participants' questions from chat)
4: 50 PM	Closing Rev. Hiram Ratliff Pastor, New Tabernacle Baptist Church (Bronx, NY)

**APPENDIX Q:
TIMELINE**

Date	Task Activity	Tools to Complete Task	Personal Responsible
10/23/2020	Proposal Approved	Completed	JJ
July 2021- Ongoing	Connect with Advisor	Telephone and virtual meeting (if needed). Provide a copy of the approved Demonstration Project-Completed	J.J.
December 2021 - Ongoing	Meet with Christian Education	Virtual Meeting. Updates and Next Steps	JJ
Ongoing	Discuss Plan-of-Action Strategy	Flyers/Advertisement for Information Sessions for a sermon and speaking engagement.	J.J. with Christian Education
Ongoing	Bi-Yearly Report	Develop Format	J.J. with Christian Education
Ongoing	Bi-Yearly Report Christian Education	Virtual Meeting. Discuss Report - Ongoing	J.J. with Christian Education and teachers
Ongoing	Planning, Transformation, and Survey's	Draft Templates for Training Sessions	J.J. with Christian Education and teachers

**APPENDIX R:
BUDGET**

Date	Task Activity	Tools to Complete Task	Responsible Party	Budgetary consideration /cost	Source of Funding
1/4/2022	Strategy 1	Discuss: Senior Pastor Elect Vision for Christian Education 2022	JJ, Senior Pastor, and Christian Education Co-Chair	\$1,500+ Ongoing	UBC Christian Education
Ongoing	Strategy 2	Development Letters to present to companies for resources: Apple, Apple Resources, Local Library, Local Tech Company	JJ and Christian Education Co-Chair	\$TBD	UBC Christian Education
Ongoing	Strategy 3	Discuss Preliminary Plan-of-Action Older Adult Technology Ministry and Safety Measures	Jenice Jeter, Senior Pastor, and Christian Education Co-Chair	\$TBD	UBC Christian Education

APPENDIX S:
SITE TEAM COMMITTEE APPROVAL LETTER

The Rev. Dr. C. Vernon Mason
Director, Doctor of Ministry Program
New York Theological Seminary
475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10115

February 12, 2022

Re: Site Team Letter of Approval for Jenice E. Jeter demonstration project
“Amalgamated Consumer Information: Understanding the Technological Impact of the
Covid-19 Pandemic on Older Adult Congregants.”

Dear Dr. Mason:

Words cannot describe the profound appreciation for the work and passion for what
Jenice E. Jeter presents and has to offer. I write to approve the Doctor of Ministry project
completion of candidate Jenice E. Jeter on behalf of the site team committee with
profound excitement and pleasure.

Ms. Jeter’s project “AMALGAMATED CONSUMER INFORMATION:
UNDERSTANDING THE TECHNOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC ON OLDER ADULT CONGREGANTS” is academically and theologically
pertinent to ministry today and far beyond the unprecedented time within we live.

Sincerely,

Earlene Jenkins

APPENDIX T:
CASE STUDY AUTHORIZATION LETTER

Date: _____

I hereby give authorization for Minister Jenice E. Jeter, in New York Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry Program to use the information provided to her in her demonstration project, “Amalgamated Consumer Information: Understanding the Technological Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Older Adult Congregants.”

Signature: _____

Minister Jenice E. Jeter, MSA, MA, DMin (Candidate)

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